

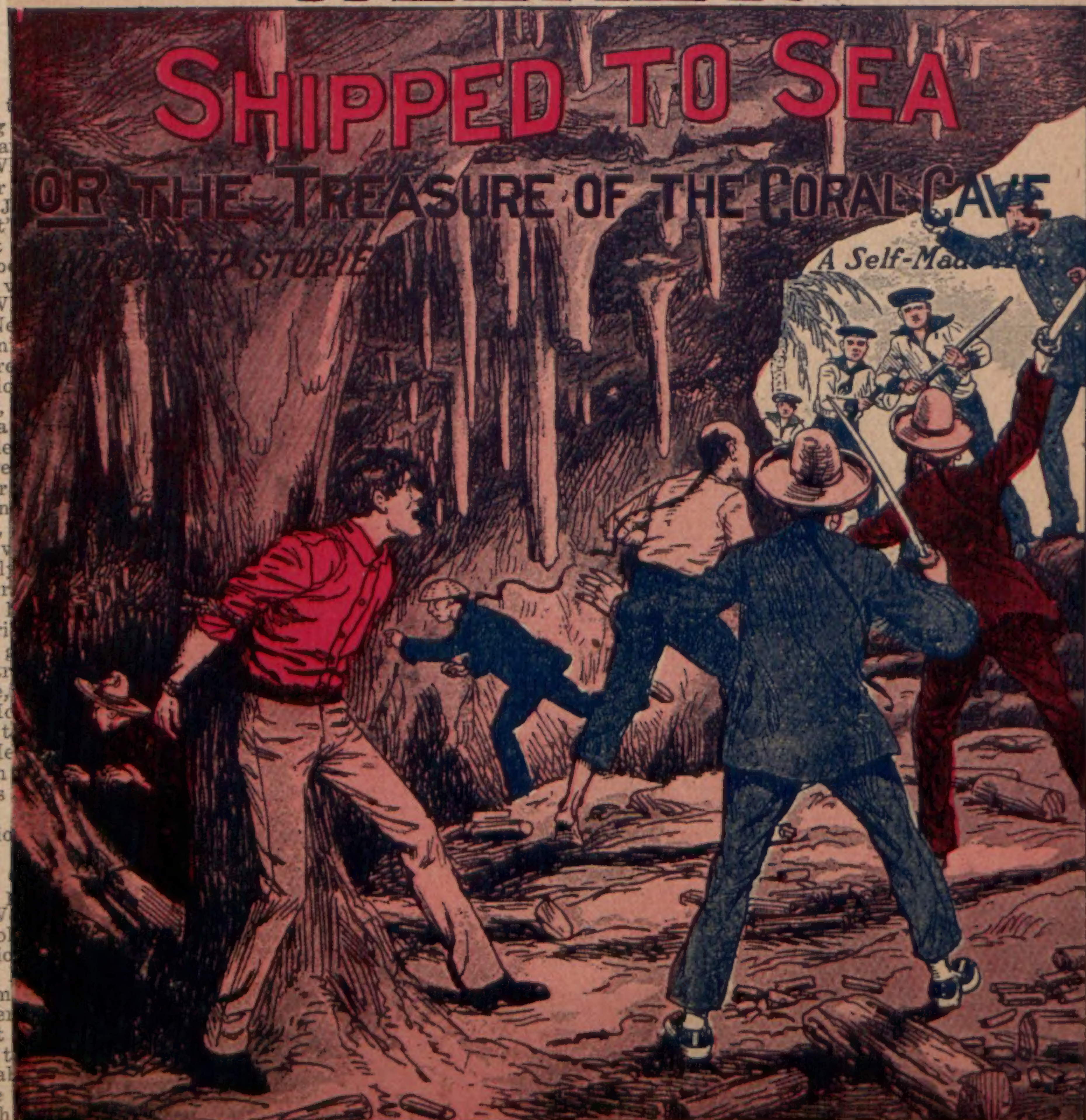
No. 899

DECEMBER 22, 1922

7 Cents

FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS WEEKLY. WHO MAKE MONEY.



At that moment a naval lieutenant, followed by a bunch of armed sailors, suddenly appeared at the entrance of the coral cave. Their unexpected coming threw the members of the Chinese secret society into a state of great consternation.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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No. 899

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1922

Price 7 Cents

SHIPPED TO SEA

OR, THE TREASURE OF THE CORAL CAVE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Introduces Our Hero.

"I tell you what, Joe, I won't stand this kind of thing much longer," said Clif Harding to his particular friend, Joe Thompson.

"What's the matter now? Have you had another run-in with your respected step-father?" said Joe, with a sympathetic grin.

"It's a dead-letter day in my calendar when I don't have trouble with him," growled Clif. "If he doesn't look out something will happen to him that will make him sit up and take notice."

"What would you do to him?"

"Never mind. I'll fix him somehow if he doesn't let me alone. He was awfully nice to me before my mother married him—which, in my opinion, was the most foolish thing she could have done, for my father left her well provided for—but a month or so after Mr. Jaycox took up his residence here, in the role of my step-father, he altered his manner toward me completely. I never liked him, for he is one of those sleek, sanctimonious men I mistrust, but for my mother's sake, if for no other reason, I would have treated him with the respect his position as head of the family entitles him to, if he had behaved decently toward me."

"I heard my mother tell a visitor that Jaycox married your mother for her property."

"I guess your mother didn't tell any more than the truth, but he got left to some extent just the same," said Clif, with a satisfied smile.

"How did he? Your father left this fine property to your mother, didn't he?"

"He left it to her in trust for me. When I reach twenty-one it will all come to me."

"Is that so? I supposed you wouldn't get it till your mother died. I think that is the general opinion around here. My folks didn't see why your mother should marry Mr. Jaycox, or anybody else, for that matter, even if he is the owner of a prosperous ship-chandlery business."

"Well, Mr. Jaycox and my mother used to go to school together, and were sweethearts, after a fashion, before my father turned up and cut him out. I've heard he was considerably put out when my mother dropped him suddenly and married my father after a rapid-fire courtship."

"It couldn't have broken his heart, for he married the Widow White soon after; and he has a son about your age at a boarding school, who will come to live with you as soon as the term is over, which will be soon now. I have been wondering how you two will get along, for you never did

hitch at the public school. As he is very like his father, I have no doubt he will try to get back at you for the lickings you have given him."

"I'll break his head if he puts on any airs with me," said Clif, angrily. "He was the cause of the rumpus at the breakfast table this morning. Mr. Jaycox remarked that Ferdy would be with us in a day or two, and he hoped that he and I would be excellent friends."

"What did you say to that?" grinned Joe.

"I told him flatly that I doubted it. That Ferdy wasn't the kind of boy I took to. I reminded him that we were always scrapping until he sent his son away to boarding-school."

"And what did your stepfather say?"

"He said I misjudged Ferdy, and he trusted that now we were stepbrothers I would treat him with brotherly consideration and endeavor to make things pleasant for him. He said Ferdy was entitled to the same standing as myself, and he didn't want to hear of any trouble between us."

"That was a hint to you not to interfere if Ferdy wants to use your riding horse, or your sailboat, or anything else that belongs to you," said Joe.

"I know it, and I told Mr. Jaycox that if his son turned over a new leaf and behaved himself, we might possibly get along after a fashion; but for all that, I denied that Ferdy was entitled to the same standing as myself, for the property was practically mine, and would come to me absolutely when I reached my twenty-first year. Mr. Jaycox scowled at my reply, and refused to have anything further to say to me."

"I'm glad there is no danger of your step-father getting the property in case your mother happened to die. That would be tough on you, for he surely would see that his son got all the good things, while you would have to scratch for your share."

The foregoing conversation took place shortly after Clif finished his breakfast, came out into the yard, and found Joe waiting for him there. The two boys then decided to go fishing down to Alameda Creek, which was not far away, and when Clif got his line, and dug up some worms for bait, they started off. Clif Harding was an only son. He had lost his father two years since, and within the previous six months had, much against his private feelings, acquired a stepfather in the person of Henry Jaycox, a widower, with a son named Ferdy, whom Clif regarded as a sanctimonious little hypocrite, built on the same lines as his father. Until Mr. Jaycox won the

hand of Mrs. Harding, who was regarded as an eligible widow by reason of the fine piece of suburban property over which she exercised control, that gentleman occupied, with his son and a housekeeper, a modest cottage in the town of Alameda.

Immediately on his marriage Mr. Jaycox dismissed his housekeeper and rented his cottage. His son he had previously sent away to a boarding-school up in Napa Valley, and the young man, presumed much advanced in knowledge, was expected back to spend his midsummer vacation of ten weeks at his new home. Clif and he had attended the same grammar school in Alameda for some years, and had always been at daggers' points. Ferdy had the same liking for Clif that Old Nick is supposed to have for holy water, and the latter reciprocated the sentiment. Being stouter and having more "sand" than Ferdy, all the advantage rested with Clif, who had whaled the Jaycox scion on several occasions, to the great delight of a group of admiring schoolmates who cordially detested Ferdy for his sneakyish proclivities. Under such circumstances the prospect of these two boys living in amity and good fellowship under the same roof was not very good. Henry Jaycox, as Clif told his chum, Joe Thompson, had been a friend of Mrs. Harding in her youth, and had paid her much attention later until she handed him the mitten in favor of George Harding.

Piqued at losing her, Jaycox married a widow with some money, which he invested in the ship chandlery business on the San Francisco water front, and prospered. The lady did not live long after presenting her husband with a son and heir, and so matters stood until Mr. Harding died suddenly. After waiting what he considered a reasonable time, Mr. Jaycox resumed polite attentions to the widow, which gradually developed into a regular courtship, and as Jaycox was rather handsome in face and figure, and knew how to make the most of his advantages, he finally prevailed on Clif's mother to marry him. While it is true that Mr. Jaycox liked the widow for herself, he chiefly regarded her as a desirable acquisition on account of the property left by her husband. A bitter disappointment was reserved for him. He discovered after his marriage that the late George Harding had left his property to his wife in trust for Clif, who was to come into it when he reached his majority, three years hence. Also, that the income on which she lived would go to the boy when she died. The only crumb of comfort he could extract from this state of affairs was, if Clif died before coming of age, the property and invested income would revert absolutely to his wife, and in that event if she died it would fall into his hands. Clif had just graduated from the high school, and his stepfather proposed to take him into his store and put him to work. He made this proposition to his wife after Clif left the breakfast table.

"Time enough," said the mother. "He is entitled to his vacation. Besides, I am not sure I should care to have him go into your shop. I much prefer that he adopt a professional career. If his sentiments run in the same direction, then he should lose no time in taking up with whatever line appeals to his taste."

Mr. Jaycox bit his lip.

"Very well, Clara, we will defer the matter for

the present," he said, in the smooth tone in which he always addressed her.

The ship-chandler was a man who seldom, if ever, lost his temper, even when greatly provoked, but he was all the more dangerous on that account. Whenever he wanted to gain a point he went about it in a way that spelled success. When he rose from the breakfast table it was with the determination that his stepson must be removed from his path. He knew very well that Clif and Ferdy would never agree, and that meant constant trouble between them during the next ten weeks, which would keep the house more or less in hot water. Still, that was of minor importance compared with Mr. Jaycox's general sentiments toward the boy who stood between his wife, and incidentally himself, and the property, not to mention the invested funds from which Mrs. Jaycox drew her income. The ship-chandler had been considering for some time the question of his unexplained disappearance from his home, and he finally decided that Clif must be shipped to sea, under conditions that would ensure his complete effacement. His proposal to take the boy into his store was a mere bluff, which he suggested merely to see how his wife would take to the idea. Mr. Jaycox took the nine o'clock ferryboat for San Francisco, at which time Clif and his friend Joe Thompson were enjoying the pleasure of fishing in the creek.

CHAPTER II.—Concerning Mr. Jaycox and the Chief Mate of the Southern Cross.

Mr. Jaycox in the course of his business came in contact with all kinds of maritime people, from the chief mate of a full-rigged ship in the China or Austrian trade to the skipper of a dinkey coaster or river sloop. His store was on Pacific street, close to Drumm, and from the door a view of a part of one of the wharves and a glimpse of the bay could be obtained. The door stood between two big, not over-clean windows. In one was displayed coils of small, tarred rope, a compass or two, a sextant, a chronometer, and a lot of other maritime articles betokening the nature of the business transacted within.

The other was filled with shells from the South and other pieces of white and pink coral, various kinds of weapons picked up among the islands of the China seas and the South Pacific Ocean, a score or more of different sized Chinese mandarins, sitting cross-legged on pedestals of no great height, and displaying a most extraordinary girth about the waist, which their robes failed to cover, bunches of chopsticks with thin, miniature knives, encased in circular cases, and many other curious foreign things too numerous to mention.

All these things Mr. Jaycox bought for a song from newly-landed sailors, and disposed of them to the public at a big profit. The average ship-chandlery store did not deal in such things, but Jaycox had a fad in that direction, and he made money out of it. Every sailor who sailed those western seas knew that Jaycox bought such things, or he soon learned the fact, and they made a point of loading him up with the samples they accumulated in the course of their cruises.

As a rule, the seamen paid nothing for them, and whatever they could extract from the ship chandler for them was clear profit. The officers of the vessels frequently brought him presents of crocks of preserved ginger, cocoanuts, and similar articles, which Mr. Jaycox carried home for private consumption. Once in a while a small monkey, or a paroquet, and some bird of brilliant plumage was brought into the store, but the ship-chandler did not welcome such livestock, though he always bought them, and then got them off his hands as soon as he could. The moment you passed the door of the shop the smell of tar and other ship smells assaulted your nostrils, and you found the interior packed with every thing that was necessary to the make-up of a vessel in the furnishing line, except canvas, spars, and such things. Naturally, Mr. Jaycox had many friends and acquaintances in the maritime business, and when the idea of getting rid of his stepson occurred to him, he figured on sounding some of these people with the view of interesting one or two of them in his project.

Of course, it was a rather dangerous matter to talk about unless you knew the man you were talking to, but Mr. Jaycox was caution itself, and he was an excellent reader of character. On the morning that we introduce him and our hero to the attention of the reader, a man well adapted to any kind of rascality in which he saw money walked into his shop soon after he came to his office. The office was in the rear of the store, and the barred window overlooked a narrow bit of yard, filled with iron junk, and so enclosed by the surrounding buildings that the interior was never very light on the brightest days.

Early in the morning when the store opened, and late in the afternoon an hour or so before it closed, it was usually so obscured by the almost daily fog that Mr. Jaycox, as well as his bookkeeper in the glass-enclosed well adjoining, had to burn gas to see to do anything. The visitor we have referred to was the chief mate of a three-master in the China trade, and he was not a pleasant looking man to run against. His face was of the color of seasoned mahogany, seamed and scarred by the sun and weather of forty odd years passed in his rough calling. A man whose business it is to handle all sorts of sailors, from the average shellback down to the treacherous Lascar, can hardly be expected to look the gentleman even when ashore between cruises.

His name was Jude Brandon, and he was known among his own sailors as Black Brandon. He had the choicest assortment of swear words in the maritime dictionary, which he never failed to scatter around among the crew, but his most potent argument was his great hairy fist or an iron belaying-pin. He was a man of great strength, as tough as a bull, and was looked upon as a terror. His ship, called the Southern Cross, and flying the British flag, had arrived the day before from Hong Kong, with a cargo of tea and rice, and lay in the stream awaiting the time when she would haul into Greenwich or India Dock, under the shadow of Telegraph Hill, and unload.

This was bound to happen soon, for the tea was consigned to a big New York house, and was to go East by fast freight over the Pacific railroads. Fast freight meant that the tea was to

go through direct, without being held up or side-tracked like common freight. Judge Brandon was well acquainted with the ship-chandler. He seemed to recognize a kindred spirit in Mr. Jaycox, although no particular familiarity existed between them, and he made it a point to see that all the ship's trade in ship-chandlery passed through the Jaycox shop.

Of course, Mr. Jaycox made it an object to him to bring his trade there by presenting him with sundry evidences of his appreciation, such as a gold watch, or a sterling brand of cuff-buttons, or other articles of that nature. It was the custom all through the trade, just as it was the custom of the master stevedores to secure the discharging and loading of a vessel by bestowing presents on the captain. Mr. Jaycox was writing at his desk when a clerk announced the arrival of Jude Brandon, and the owner of the shop had the man shown in at once.

"Glad to see you, Brandon," said Jaycox, jumping up and grasping one of the hairy fists with both hands, for one of his soft hands seemed inadequate to the task. "Sit down. Help yourself to a weed and make yourself at home."

The chief mate grinned and said something in a fog-horn voice. He took a cigar of California grown tobacco, bit off the end, picked up a match and, having secured a good light, sat down.

"When did you arrive?" asked the ship-chandler, which was a singular question for Mr. Jaycox to ask, since it was part of his business to keep track of all fresh arrivals, as he could easily do from the daily paper and the tri-weekly Shipping Guide posted up in the bookkeeper's compartment.

As a matter of fact, Jaycox had been thinking of something else that morning, and had forgotten to look at the shipping intelligence.

"We passed the bar at high water last evening," replied Brandon.

"Where are you anchored?"

"Off Alcatraz."

Alcatraz was a fortified island two miles to the north of the city. The "stream" where newly arrived as well as vessels awaiting their clearance papers anchored for the time being stretched from that point around to Goat Island, which looked like the hump of gigantic, partially submerged, dromedary.

"Make a quick trip?"

"The Southern Cross always does, that's why she has the bulge on the tea trade," replied Jude, blowing a cloud of smoke.

"Well, I'm glad to see you back again. I suppose you want a few things in my line?"

"Yes. We ran into some rough weather on the way across and lost a lot of miscellaneous odds and ends which you can supply us with, I guess. Here is a list I have made up. You can get them together and deliver them after we have docked."

Mr. Jaycox ran his eye over the list and saw a goodly profit in it. He made a note on it, and going to a sliding window, opened it and shoved the paper in to his bookkeeper. Then he opened a small cupboard and brought forth a bottle of prime bourbon whisky and a couple of glasses.

"Help yourself, Brandon," he said.

The chief mate was not backward in doing so. The ship-chandler also took a small portion, which he flushed with water, for he was no drinker, and

the paid drank each other's health. After half an hour's talk, Brandon rose to go.

"One moment, Brandon," said the ship-chandler. "I have a stepson——"

"A stepson!" ejaculated the chief mate. "I thought that lad you introduced me to the last time I was here was your son. I'm bound to say that he looks as like you as one pea does to another."

"You mean Ferdy. I am not referring to him. He is my son all right. The fact is I married again since you were here last, and have acquired another boy of about the same age."

"Oh, I see. Well, what about him?" asked the mate, curiously.

"He's been reading dime novels of seafaring life, and he's plum crazy to go to sea, particularly to China."

The chief mate grinned sardonically.

"I've argued with the boy, but talk seems thrown away on him, so it occurred to me that the best way to cure him would be to fall in with his notion."

The mate grinned again.

"His mother is naturally and properly opposed to the motion, but something will have to be done or the lad will run away. Now I was thinking that if you could prevail on your captain to take him one trip——"

"You mean as a passenger?"

"No; before the mast. Let him rough it and learn for himself the truth about seafaring life. I think it will cure him."

"Would you send your own son on a trip to China and back if he was sea-struck?" he asked.

"Not by a jugful," said the ship-chandler, with some energy.

"So I thought. You know what kind of life it is. You know the kind of crew we carry. Three or four brine-soaked shell-backs, and the rest Lascars and coolies. What kind of company is that for a young fellow who has been brought up in his own home, and has never been outside of sight of land in his life? If you expect the skipper to take him afore the mast and treat him different from the rest of the crew, I'll tell you right now that it can't be done. You can't play favorites in the fore-castle of a ship. The boy would go overboard at the first chance."

"I don't expect him to be treated different from the rest of the crew," said the ship-chandler. "That would interfere with discipline. If he goes he must take things as he finds them."

"He'll find them so different from what he thinks that he'll wish himself dead before he's three days out," said the mate, grimly.

"Well, I'll see you about the matter later, Brandon," said Mr. Jaycox, hastily, turning to his desk.

The chief mate grinned and bade him good-by.

"It's a dollar to a doughnut that Jaycox wants to get his stepson out of the way," muttered Brandon, as he walked through the store. "He was just beating around the bush to see how I'd take the proposition. I always sized Jaycox up as a pretty foxy gent. He's one of those men who take care not to give themselves away until they are sure of their ground. I must investigate matters on the quiet and see if this lad he's acquired as a stepson is really stuck on going

to sea—China, particularly. If he isn't, then I'll know Jaycox has a scheme up his sleeve, and if he's willing to pay well, I'll help him put the job through."

Then the chief mate of the Southern Cross walked out into Pacific street and turned his face west.

CHAPTER III.—Ferdy Jaycox.

Clif Harding and Joe Thompson spent the morning fishing, and their success was shown by the big string of fish each carried home at noon. That evening when Mr. Jaycox came home he showed his wife a telegram from Ferdy, informing his father that he would arrive at Alameda at about noon next day. Clif heard the telegram read, and after dinner he went over to Joe's house to tell him about it.

"Who's going to meet him?" asked Joe.

"You mean at the station?"

"Yes."

"I don't know that anybody is going to meet him. He knows where our house is, and he's old enough to find his way there without a nurse."

"Considering that it's his first appearance at the Harding house, I think he ought to be accorded a reception," grinned Joe.

"A reception!" stared Clif.

"Yes. One that he'll remember for a while to come. I'm ready to help you hand him anything in reason."

"I see what you're driving at. The idea isn't a bad one; but, of course, he'll squeal to his father, and I'll be treated to a healthy call-down. However, I don't care for that. I'm game for anything that will make Ferdy look two ways for Sunday. I'm down on the beast like a car-load of bricks. He'll want to ride my pony, and his father will insist that I let him. Then he'll want to use my sailboat, though he knows as much about sailing as a sore-eyed mule. There is sure to be a ruction every day of his vacation."

"I'd fetch the pony over to the station, put a prickly ball under the saddle, and then after shaking hands with Ferdy, I'd allow him the honor of riding to the house. What the animal wouldn't do to him on the road is hardly worth talking about," and Joe laughed fit to split.

"A good idea," grinned Clif. "I could put the burr where it wouldn't hurt Sultan much, but would tickle him enough to raise his dander. He doesn't like to carry a strange rider, anyway, and the burr will do the rest."

"Just so. You couldn't get into trouble over that even if the pony gave Ferdy the jolt of his life, because your stepbrother couldn't deny that you welcomed him kindly, and allowed him to ride your animal. If Sultan didn't take kindly to him, the blame couldn't be laid on you. At any rate, it might serve to keep Ferdy from wanting to experiment with the pony again."

"The latter consideration appeals to me most," said Clif. "I want him to keep clear of Sultan."

"As to your boat, I never knew that Ferdy knew how to sail one. At any rate, he can't get into the boat-house without the key, and you are not likely to put it in his way."

"Of course I won't, but if he wants the boat, he'll appeal to his father."

"What if he does? Both the boat and the pony were presents from your real father, consequently they belong to you individually, and your stepfather has no control over either. If he tries to exercise any authority in the matter, you can appeal to your mother."

Clif thought that his stepfather wouldn't respect his vested rights a lot when brought into competition with the desires of his son Ferdy, but he determined to put up a fight against aggression. When the local train stopped at Alameda at noon next day, Clif and Joe were on hand to welcome Ferdy Jaycox. That lad stepped out of one of the cars with a grip that was stuffed to bursting.

"Hello, Ferdy, how are you, old hoss?" cried Clif, stepping up to him and grasping his disengaged hand with a grip that was full of power.

Ferdy looked astonished at this apparently friendly reception from the boy who had always been his enemy, even though fate had transformed Clif into his stepbrother. The look of surprise, however, quickly faded into one of pain.

"Let go, you're hurting me," he howled, as he dropped his grip.

Joe, standing by, saw his chance, and he grabbed Ferdy's other hand and applied the squeeze. Ferdy danced and yelled like a monkey on a hot stove.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, Ferdy," said Clif, beamingly.

"Same here," said Joe, giving another squeeze.

"Oh, oh! You're breaking my fingers. Let go, will you?" howled Ferdy, the tears running down his cheeks.

"What's the matter with you?" said Clif, letting go of his hand. "Aren't you glad to see your new stepbrother?"

"What ails you? Aren't you glad to see your old friend Thompson?"

"You aren't friends of mine, neither of you," cried Ferdy, blowing his injured digits.

"Sure we are," insisted Clif. "Aren't we relatives now?"

"All Clif's friends are my friends," said Joe, with a grin.

"What did you want to hurt me for, then?" said Ferdy.

"Are your fingers tender? We didn't know that. That's the honest way to shake hands. Shows you mean the right thing. Well, how are you, anyway?"

"Where's my father? Why didn't he come after me?" said Ferdy.

"He had to go to business, and he delegated the pleasure of receiving you to us. I hope you appreciate the honor we are paying you."

Ferdy didn't look as if he did.

"I can find my way home myself. I hope my father has given me a decent room."

"All the rooms are decent in our house. There's a very nice one in the garret which has been selected for you."

"Me go in the garret? I guess not. I want as good a room as you have."

"How do you know but my room is in the garret, too?"

"I don't believe it is."

"You can't expect to have as good a room as mine, because the house is mine."

"Yours! I guess not. It belongs to your

mother, and as your mother has married my father, of course, he has everything to say about the house. I shall insist on having as good a room as yours."

"We'll have to have one made to order for you. Pick up his grip, Joe, and let's get a move on."

Ferdy had no objection to Joe carrying his heavy bag, and the three proceeded to the end of the station where Sultan, the pony, was tied to a tree.

"That's my pony, Ferdy. Isn't he a dandy?"

Ferdy's eyes glistened.

"He's half mine now," he said, "so I'll ride him whenever I feel like it."

"No, he isn't half yours, Ferdy. He belongs wholly to me," said Clif.

"I have a right to half of what belongs to you."

"Not at all, Ferdy; but I won't be mean to you, particularly on the day you have come to your new home. You shall ride him to the house, and we'll walk on behind."

Clif unhitched Sultan, and taking a couple of burrs out of his pocket, shoved them under the saddle, where Ferdy's weight would press them against the pony's skin and make him take notice.

"You know how to ride, don't you, Ferdy?" he said.

"Sure I do," replied the lad, confidently.

"Well, treat Sultan gently, and don't urge him to go too fast. He isn't used to any other mount but myself, and he might get skittish. Understand?"

"Don't worry about me," said Ferdy, leaping into the saddle.

The moment he came down on it Clif let go of the bridle, and the pony, with a snort of surprise, sprang forward like a Western cayuse on the war-path.

"Whoa!" cried Ferdy.

Instead of stopping, Sultan was off like a shot, flinging his heels in the air and acting like a wild animal generally. As Ferdy couldn't ride worth a cent, he grabbed the pony around the neck with both arms, and held on for dear life. Up and down he bounced, and every time he hit the saddle the pony made another spring and shook his head. The pair vanished up the road in a cloud of dust, and Clif and Joe just stood and roared with glee. Finally they started to follow, lugging Ferdy's grip between them.

"He couldn't ride a fat rail, much less your pony," chuckled Joe.

"How much will you bet he sticks on till he reaches the house?" said Clif.

"I'll bet a dime he doesn't," said Joe.

"I guess you'd win."

At that moment around the turn in the road the pony reappeared, trotting back.

"Here comes Sultan without Ferdy. Your stepbrother has got tired of riding," laughed Joe.

The pony came up to Clif, stopped and rubbed his nose against his arm.

"Have you come back, old fellow?" said Clif, shoving his hand under the saddle and pulling out the burrs, whereupon the pony shook his mane with an air of relief.

Clif pulled a rag and a bottle out of his pocket, soaked the rag with some of the contents of the bottle, and shoved it over the animal's inflamed skin.

"It was a shame to play such a trick on you, Sultan," said Clif; "but it was done in a good cause. I hope you gave that little beast a good fling."

Leading the pony, they continued on, and a short distance ahead they found Ferdy sitting against the fence, covered with the dust of the road, and looking as if he hadn't a friend in the world.

"I thought you could ride, Ferdy?" grinned Clif, when they came up.

Ferdy sprang up with a howl of anger and made a vicious kick at one of the pony's legs.

"Hold on, what are you doing?" cried Clif, pulling him back.

"He threw me over his head, and I'm going to get square," cried Ferdy, struggling to get at the animal. "I'll get my father to sell him."

"You will, I don't think. Don't act like a baby."

Then Ferdy made a grave mistake. He deliberately kicked Clif in the shin. In another moment he was down in the road from a smash in the jaw that made every tooth in his head ring.

"Take that, you ungrateful little beast," said Clif. "Drop his grip, Joe, and let him carry it the rest of the way himself."

Then the chums walked off with the pony, leaving Ferdy holding his jaw in the middle of the road.

CHAPTER IV.—Ferdy Is Handled Without Gloves.

Ferdy Jaycox looked pretty rocky when he walked into the grounds of his new home, called Harding Villa. What he didn't intend to get his father to do to his new stepbrother is hardly worth mentioning. He had always hated Clif, and he was now down on him worse than ever. He intended to insist that the pony be sold, not only because the animal had thrown him, but because he wished to get square with Clif.

Ferdy knew he had considerable control over his father, and he determined to push his influence to the limit in every way that would hurt his stepbrother. He was meaner than dirt when he chose to be, and had no regard for any one's feelings except his own. The gardener was at work on the lawn when Ferdy made his appearance. The man didn't know young Jaycox, and asked him what he wanted there.

"What's that to you?" snarled Ferdy.

"Don't talk that way to me, you young whippersnapper!" roared the gardener, who took the boy for a peddler, as the grip looked much the worse for wear. "Get off these grounds. Cheap Jacks are not wanted here."

"How dare you insult me?" cried Ferdy, mad as a hornet. "I'll see that you are fired so quick it will take your breath away."

That was too much for the man. He dropped the implement he was using, seized Ferdy and ran him out through the gate, pitching his grip after him.

"Get on your way, now, or I'll hand you something worse," said the gardener, who then went back to his work.

Ferdy picked up a stone and threw it at him.

It caught the man on the ear and drew blood. The gardener went after him with blood in his eye. Ferdy, being a rank coward, started to run, abandoning his grip in the middle of the road. The gardener chased him down the road and over the fence into the meadow where a brook ran. There he caught him, boxed his ears till Ferdy howled like a stuck pig, and then threw him into the brook. Truly, Ferdy was up against it hard. Half an hour later he appeared in the yard of the villa with a grip, looking a complete wreck. His clothes were ruined from dirt and water, and he was a truly miserable looking object. One of the servants was beating a suit of Mr. Jaycox's clothes in the yard, and she gave a gasp when she saw Ferdy.

"For heaven's sake, who are you, and what do you want around here?" she said.

"I'm Ferdy Jaycox," replied the youth, in a lugubrious tone.

"Ferdy Jaycox!" exclaimed the woman, who had heard that the son of the master of the house was expected to appear at the house that day. "For the love of Patrick you can't be Mr. Jaycox's son, who's expected to-day."

"I am. I've been outrageously treated since I reached this town."

"Sure you look like a tramp."

"Clif Harding, who lives here, knocked me down in the road, after I'd been thrown by his pony, and the man who is working out front threw me off the place, then chased me, and after slapping me around, pushed me into the water. If he isn't discharged when my father comes home, I'll run away."

The servant was astonished.

"If you are Mr. Jaycox's son you'd better go into the house and see your stepmother, who is just eating lunch with her son Clifford."

"Do you expect me to go in this way? Go and tell her that I have arrived, and the state I'm in."

The servant ran in, and presently returned with Mrs. Jaycox. She knew Ferdy, and was amazed at his condition.

"You poor boy, what has happened to you?" she cried, kissing him.

Ferdy blubbered out his story, and did not fail to roundly denounce both Clif and the gardener. He was sent upstairs to change his clothes and make himself presentable. When he appeared in the dining-room he scowled at Clif, who had told his mother his side of the story and been acquitted of blame. The trouble he had been through had not affected Ferdy's appetite, and he got away with all the good things in sight. The gardener was subsequently questioned by Mrs. Jaycox, and he admitted all the facts, but declared he had no idea he was dealing with Mr. Jaycox's son.

As Clif did not care to have any further talk with his stepbrother, he went over to Joe Thompson's house and spent the afternoon with him. There was the dickens to pay when the ship-chandler got home and Ferdy told his tale of woe. Clif asserted that he had treated Ferdy with great kindness, even letting him ride his pony home.

"It wasn't my fault that Sultan threw him. He doesn't know how to ride or he'd have got along all right. I admit I did strike him when he turned ugly and kicked me in the chin. He

had no right to assault me that way," said Clif. Ferdy declared the pony must be sold, and Clif declared it shouldn't be sold. As his mother backed him up, Mr. Jaycox felt it prudent to pass no decision in the matter. The gardener was lectured, but not discharged. He apologized to Ferdy, but it was some days before that youth was appeased. A week passed, during which a kind of armed truce existed between the step-brothers. Ferdy amused himself in his own way, while Clif and Joe went about together as usual. At Mrs. Jaycox's suggestion they invited Ferdy to go sailing one afternoon. Ferdy wanted to go by himself, but finally gave in, and the three took a trip down Alameda Creek and out into the bay. Clif and Joe deemed it advisable not to work any game off on Ferdy that day, so that youth got back in good shape. When Clif ran the sailboat up an arm of the creek to the boat house, the boys saw a hard-looking man, with a patch over one eye, a pipe in his mouth, and a distant flavor of salt water about him, seated in front of the house. This individual was Jude Brandon, chief mate of the Southern Cross, in disguise.

He had come down to that neighborhood to find out a thing or two about the boy the ship-chandler had told him was so anxious to go to sea.

"Hello, my hearties, been taking a sail?" said Jude, in his fog-horn tones.

"That's what we have," replied Clif, all three eyeing the stranger curiously.

"A cruise on the creek or the bay ain't like taking a regular trip on the briny. That's the kind of life for a lad with red blood in him."

"It may be, but I guess we're not hankering after it," said Clif.

"This here is Mr. Jaycox's property, ain't it?"

"No, it isn't; it's mine."

"Get out, it belongs to your mother," put in Ferdy.

"She doesn't own a foot of it. She's holding it in trust till I come of age. If you don't believe that, ask your father."

Jude knew Ferdy by sight, having met him at his father's store a year or so before, and he easily concluded that Clif was the lad Mr. Jaycox had referred to. To make certain he asked:

"You're a relative of Mr. Jaycox, aren't you?"

"He married my mother," admitted Clif.

"That makes you his stepson, then?"

"Yes, I suppose it does."

"Is that your boat?"

"Yes, it's mine."

"You like sailing around on smooth water, eh?"

"Yes."

"Ever thought you'd like to be a sailor?"

"Never," replied Clif, promptly. "The life reads well enough in books, but I've heard it's a hard life. Besides, why should I go to sea as a sailor, when in three years I'll come into this fine property?"

"Unless you should happen to die, matey. Who would the property go to then?"

"My mother."

"And your mother is married to Mr. Jaycox?"

"Yes."

That was enough for Jude. He could see through a millstone when there was a hole in

it, even if the hole wasn't big enough for him to shove his fist into.

"Well, my hearty, I wish you luck, and hope you may come into your property when the time comes. I never owned any property myself, and never expect to. I'm just an ordinary shell-back, and have kicked around the world ever since I was knee high to a marling-spike. One of these days I'll turn up my toes and that will be the end of me," said Jude, knocking the ashes out of his pipe and getting on his feet.

He bade the boys good-by and walked off toward the town.

"I wonder who that sailor chap is, and what brought him around here?" said Clif, looking after Jude.

Joe couldn't guess, and Ferdy didn't try to.

"He seemed mighty inquisitive," said Clif.

"That's right," nodded Joe.

"He knew Mr. Jaycox lived on this property. I wonder if he's up to some kind of game?"

"Maybe he wants to hook you off to sea."

"Hook me off to sea! What for?"

"To fill up some craft that's short of hands."

"I guess there's no trouble picking up sailors in 'Frisco. I wouldn't be any use aboard a ship. I'd only be in the way."

Clif looked up the boat-house and the boys walked up to the house.

CHAPTER V.—Abducted.

A month passed away, and Clif and Ferdy managed to get on without having another scrap. The latter was often disagreeable, but for his mother's sake Clif put up with his conduct, and kept on a friendly footing with him. Jude Brandon made a point to call on the ship-chandler again while the Southern Cross was lying at her dock taking in her cargo for Shanghai, China.

Mr. Jaycox made no overtures at this second interview, and Jude wondered if he had changed his mind with respect to his stepson. Finally the ship's hatches were put on and secured, and she was hauled out into the stream. Then Jude paid his third visit to the shop.

"How about that stepson of yours?" he said. "Going to send him to China on the Southern Cross?"

"Hem!" said Mr. Jaycox. "Do you think it could be arranged?"

"Sure it could if you'll make it an object for me to take him."

"What would you call an object?"

"Five hundred dollars would do, though it's cheap under the circumstances."

"Cheap!" cried the ship-chandler. "Why, I could send him the round trip by steamer for half of that."

"I guess you could, but he'd come back."

"Of course he'd come back."

"But your idea is not to have him come back; ain't that it?" said Jude, with a covert grin.

"What do you mean, Brandon?"

"I mean that you'd like to get him out of the way."

"Why—why should I?"

"Because he owns that property over at Ala-

meda you're living on with his mother—leastwise he will own it if he lives long enough."

Mr. Jaycox gasped.

"How did you learn that?"

"By looking into the matter. After you spoke about your stepson wanting to go to sea so bad you were afraid he'd run away, I was curious to get a sight of the young fellow, so I got into conversation with him, and soon found out that his wanting to go to sea was all moonshine. Then I knew you had some object of your own in the background. I pumped him a bit and learned enough to show me that it would be greatly to your advantage if he slipped his cable before he reached twenty-one years of age. Well, if you want to make any arrangement to that effect, I'm your man. Pay me \$500 cash down, and I'll guarantee he won't trouble you any more."

"What would you do to him?"

"Never mind. I'd earn the money."

"Do you think anything would happen to him if he was shipped to sea?"

"That would depend on our arrangement. If you didn't want him to come back, as I guess is the fact, he wouldn't come back."

"What would become of him?"

"He might fall overboard some dark night and go to Davy Jones' locker, or something else might happen to him. I've known of landlubbers falling off a yard because they wasn't used to going aloft. Five hundred dollars is a cheap price to pay for getting rid of an obstacle. If you want to do business with me, say so, if you don't, I'll be off."

"If I thought I could depend on you, Brandon—"

"You've known me some time. You ought to know whether you can or not."

"If the job went through you'd never let on anything about it, would you?"

"Not a word. Why should I? Would it pay me to do so?"

"How is the boy to be got aboard? It must be the night you sail."

"I'll figure out a plan."

"And the captain will take him?"

"He won't know anything about the matter till it's too late. He won't care, anyway. I'll tell him the boy is a stowaway."

"Five hundred dollars is a lot of money."

"Pooh! It isn't worth thinking about?"

"You want it all in advance?"

"Yes, for the job will have to be pulled off at the last moment."

"And I can depend on it that the boy won't come back?"

"You can take your oath he won't."

"Call and see me to-morrow afternoon at five o'clock and we'll go into the matter," said Mr. Jaycox.

"All right. I'll be on hand," said Jude, who then took his leave.

At the breakfast table four days later, Mr. Jaycox proposed that Clif and Ferd come to the city that afternoon and meet him at the store.

"We'll go to dinner and then to the theater," he said, with one of his hypocritical smiles, "and return home by the last Oakland boat."

Ferd thought that would be fine, and Clif, unsuspecting of what was in store for himself,

had no objection to accepting the invitation. The fact that Mrs. Jaycox was not included in the invitation was due, presumably, to the fact that she was away from home visiting her sister. Clif and Ferd took the four o'clock boat across, landed at the foot of Market street, and strolled down at the foot of Pacific street, and presently entered the ship-chandlery establishment. The late afternoon fog was beginning to stream in over the western hills by that time, and there was no doubt that the northern end of the city would be lost in it about dark. It was then five o'clock, and though the sun was not due to set for over two hours, the gas jets were lighted in the back part of the store.

Mr. Jaycox told the boys to take a run on the docks until six o'clock, when they would go uptown to dinner. They had no special desire to hang around the store, which smelled so strong of ships, so they followed his suggestion. There was lots to interest them along the wharves, and time passed quickly. They were standing at the end of Greenwich Dock, which was nearly deserted at that hour, watching some boys fishing for crabs with a home-made net, made of an iron hoop and crossed strips of hay rope, when a voice at Clif's elbow said:

"Hello, my hearty, we meet again."

Clif turned around and came face to face with the one-eyed sailor he had previously seen at the boat-house over in Alameda. As the reader knows, this individual was Jude Brandon in disguise. Of course, Clif recognized him, and was rather surprised at this second meeting.

"I see we do," said Clif. "Is this where you hang out?"

"I'll allow it is," replied the unsavory looking mariner.

"Given up going to sea?"

"A chap can't find a berth with only one eye."

"How do you pick up a living?"

"Doing odd jobs along the water front, and disposing of sundry curiosities I've picked up in foreign ports. Would you gents like to buy anything in that line? I have got a number of things in my trunk where I board yonder," and the speaker swept his arm along the foot of Telegraph Hill, where were situated a number of cheap sailors' boarding places, groggeries and longshoremen's tenements.

"No," said Clif; "my stepfather, who keeps a ship-chandlery store in Pacific street, has a window full of such articles."

"You mean Jaycox. Everybody knows he buys curiosities, but he doesn't give much for them. It's like giving them away to deal with him. I brought him a curious little silver-tipped Chinese idol yesterday, and all he offered me for it was four bits. Think of that—four bits for a lucky Chinese household god. If you carry it around in your pocket you'll never be without money."

"What did you want to sell it for, then?"

The one-eyed man seemed taken aback by that.

"Oh, I have two of them," he said, by way of explanation.

"Then you ought always to have money, if there is anything in the image."

"I always have some, but you see I'm rather reckless with my funds. Would you like to buy one of them lucky gods?"

"What do you want for it?"

"Two dollars."

Clif declined to invest at that price.

"If you see it you'll buy it," said the sailor.

"Come over to my boarding place and I'll let you see all my curiosities."

"No, it's getting late and we are due back at the store," said Clif, consulting his silver watch.

"It won't take more'n ten minutes," said the sailor, hooking his arm in the boy's.

"Hold on. Hands off," said Clif, who objected to the familiarity.

"No offense, young gent," said the disguised Jude, releasing him. "You won't look at my curiosities, then?"

"Not this afternoon. Come, Ferdy, it's nearly six. Your father told us to get back to the store at that hour."

The fog had come in so quick that the air was now quite misty around the docks at that end of the city. The boys who had been fishing for crabs had departed for their homes and there was nobody on the dock but themselves. At the head of the wharf was a landing where Whitehall rowboats could be hired, with men to row them, at any hour of the night or day. The chief mate kept close alongside of the boys and engaged their attention as much as he could, edging them over toward the boat landing. Suddenly he put his fingers to his lips and blew a shrill whistle. Up the steps of the landing tumbled several swarthy featured, villainous looking Lascars, with their heads swathed in colored handkerchiefs that gave them a piratical air.

"Lay hold of these lads and take them aboard," said Brandon, in a voice of authority.

Clif and Ferdy stared back in consternation, and the latter uttered a cry of fear. The Lascars lost no time in obeying orders, one of them seized the ship-chandler's son, and the rest reaching for Clif. The lad, however, was not such an easy mark as Ferdy, whose cries for help was speedily choked off. He realized that some crooked game was on the tapis, and he prepared to meet it to the best of his ability. He side-stepped the first rascal and planted a blow on his jaw that knocked him spinning against the nearest spile head. Brandon uttered an imprecation when he saw that his chief victim was game, and he dashed into the scrimmage himself. Clif hadn't the ghost of a show against that tough bunch. He did the best he could to defend himself, and punched a second Lascar sailor in the nose, but a ponderous blow from the chief mate, who was accustomed to dealing with unruly seamen, stretched him senseless on the wharf.

"Into the boat with both of them," he cried, tearing off the patch that had ornamented his left eye.

Ferdy struggled ineffectually in the grasp of the Lascar who had him, and was choked unconscious. The boys were dragged down the stairs and hauled into a long, black boat which bore the name of the Southern Cross on her stern. The Lascars shoved out the oars, and Jude took his seat at the tiller.

"Shove off!" he cried. "We have just time to reach the ship."

The boat glided away from the head of the dock into the gathering mist that lay close to

the water of the bay. She quickly shot past the end of the dock, and the chief mate headed her for a ship two miles away that lay bow to the Heads with her weather-beaten canvas unloosened and hanging in folds from her yards. The tide was rising fast, and a tug was steaming out to the craft, which was tugging at her anchor as if anxious to be off on her long trip to Chinese waters.

The plot arranged between Brandon and Mr. Jaycox was succeeding in first-class shape, only differently and somewhat sooner than the ship-chandler expected. Brandon was not only taking the real victim to sea, but also Master Ferdy. He had an object in nabbing young Jaycox. He knew he had the ship-chandler in his power, and he intended to extort money from him later for the return of his son.

This part of the scheme had been suggested by the captain of the ship, an unscrupulous man, who stood in with his mate in the conspiracy. And so while Mr. Jaycox impatiently awaited the return of the two boys at his store, to take them to dinner, the lads were carried out to the ship, bundled aboard, and thrown into the fore-castle. The tug came alongside at the same time and was made fast. Then the anchor was raised and the vessel started on her way toward the "Heads."

CHAPTER VI.—At Sea.

Shipped to sea! That fact was impressed upon the two boys as soon as they recovered their senses, which they did as the tug was cutting loose from the Southern Cross after taking her through the Golden Gate and across the bar. The sailors were aloft shaking out the sails in a sea of fog. Their forms could not be seen from the deck, since it was already dark. Part of the crew were making a great bustle on deck, hauling the yards around and making the ropes fast to their proper pins. Clif sat up in the gloomy fore-castle and found himself in an empty bunk, roughly put together. The place was lighted only by a foul-smelling slush lamp, which swung from the black ceiling. Much of the fog through which the ship was making her way found its way down through the narrow entrance communicating with the deck, and added to the uncertain appearance of things. The boy looked around the low-ceiled room and noted that it was rising and falling slowly in a jerky way in sympathy with the action of the sea, as vessels act before their sails are regularly filled and they get on their course.

From what had transpired on the dock Clif did not need to ask himself where he was. He knew he had been carried aboard of some craft which was now on the move. He sprang out on the heaving deck with a cry of consternation. Was he being carried off to sea? Such a fate was the worst he could conceive of at that moment.

"This is an outrage!" he cried. "I must appeal to the captain."

As he looked around for the avenue of escape from the place, a figure shot toward him from the other side of the fore-castle. It was the unhappy Ferdy Jaycox who had recovered con-

sciousness and was frightened to death at his surroundings, which seemed uncanny to him. In getting out of the bunk where the Lascars had dumped him he lost his balance when the vessel rose on that side, and he slid across to Cliff.

"Save me, oh, save me!" he cried, without the least idea of the identity of the person he was addressing.

"Hello! Is that you, Ferdy?" cried Clif.

"Oh, heaven! Save me, Clif," cried Ferdy, in a paroxysm of woe.

"I'll have to save myself first," said Clif.

"Don't leave me here. Take me with you," begged the youth, seizing his stepbrother by the legs.

"All right. Get on your feet and follow me."

"Where are we? The place is moving from side to side. I can't stand up."

"We're aboard some kind of a vessel—a ship, I guess."

"What are we doing aboard of her? Did those black-looking men bring us here?"

"It's a dollar to a bit that they did."

"What for? Are they going to murder us?" faltered Ferdy.

"No, I gues not. But I fear we're going to be made sailors of."

"I don't want to be a sailor. I want to go home."

"I don't want to be a sailor, either, but I'm afraid we're up against a tough proposition. That one-eyed rascal is responsible for this. Come on deck and we'll appeal to the captain to put us on shore."

Clif found the ladder of three or four steps, and helped Ferdy mount it. They looked out on the deck and saw nothing but fog and darkness. They could hear orders shouted out from the poop deck aft, and distinguished the tramp of men moving about. The creaking of pulleys reached their ears, and the flapping of the canvas came down out of the darkness above. The vessel rolled more regularly now, but neither boy cared to take the risk of stepping out into the opaque space before them, for they could not tell where they could land. Matters on deck gradually quieted down, and the crew were gathered in the waist to be sorted out into watches by the mates who went around among them lantern in hand. As the crew was the same which had come from China in the ship, this matter was quickly arranged and the watch below was sent forward to turn in.

They came running up to the spot where the two boys stood clinging to the opening. The lads were upset in the rush and sent head over heels backward to the deck of the forecastle, where they lay half stunned until picked up by the grinning Lascars. Then Jude Brandon made his appearance to inquire after the boys. They were yanked on deck and hustled over to the rise of the poop.

"Well, my hearties, how are you feeling now?" said Jude, with a grin.

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded Clif.

"It means you are both shipped to sea."

"I want to see the captain."

"He's turned in for the night. I'm the chief mate and have charge of the ship at present."

"You look like the one-eyed chap who is responsible for our being here."

"I'm that party," grinned Jude. "Here's the shade I had over my left peeper to fool you."

Clif was somewhat astonished at this discovery.

"What's your object in carrying two boys like us off to sea? Couldn't you get plenty of men?"

"We had all the men we wanted. We wanted you and took you."

With the vessel five miles off shore and under full sail, Clif saw that further argument was useless. They were helpless to escape, and unless they put the best face they could on the matter, there was no telling what might happen to him. It was the first time in his life that the boy had been up against hard pan, but his natural pluck came to his aid, and he determined to make the best of the terrible situation, since nothing was to be gained by running his head up against a stone wall. So when the ship's articles were brought he signed them under protest. Ferdy signed them, too, for the mate's look scared him into it. They were then fitted out with a mattress and bed-clothes for their bunks, and rough suits and underwear for themselves, with such other things as they would require on the voyage. They were then sent forward with their dunnage stuffed in a bag.

Ferdy was told he could turn in and sleep until the next watch was called, while Clif was ordered to report as a member of the watch on duty which was under command of Brandon. Clif was not called upon to do anything during the spell he was on deck, for the wind was fair and just strong enough to keep the ship on her course. At midnight the watch was changed, and Ferdy was routed out of a troubled sleep and compelled to come out on the fog-shrouded deck to remain for the ensuing four hours. The chief mate's watch came on duty again at four, and one of the shellbacks having taken a liking to Clif, told him to stow himself away between a coil of rope and the weather bulwark and finish his nap, as he wouldn't be called on before morning, when the watch washed the deck down. At six bells, or seven o'clock, coffee was served out to the watch after they had cleaned the deck, a job Clif participated with naked feet, working a heavy, smooth stone back and forth with the help of one of the Lascars, while another sailor slushed the boards with water drawn from the sea.

After the watch was changed at eight, breakfast was served to all hands. During the day both boys were initiated into certain mysteries of seamanship, as the occasion called for, but while Clif accepted the inevitable with fair spirits, and got along all right, Ferdy was continually kicking, and as a consequence was handled without gloves. Clif felt sorry for him, for he looked the picture of misery, and advised him for his own good to do the best he could and say nothing.

"You can't help yourself, Ferdy, any more than I can. We've been treated shamefully, I know, but that doesn't mend matters any. If you don't fall to like a man, you may be knocked overboard when you aren't looking for a shove, and that will be the end of you," said Clif.

"I wish I was dead," said Ferdy, passionately. "I can't stand this kind of life. Why, the fool

is beastly. I'm half starved, because I can't eat it."

"Oh, you'll get used to it, bad as it is. Keep your courage up and we'll give the ship the slip the first port we stop at."

"The first port! There ain't any port between California and China."

"You mean no port we're likely to stop at? Well, we can't leave the vessel till she stops somewhere, that's certain. That's the worst of going to sea."

"How long will it take to reach China?"

"I couldn't tell you. Ask one of the men of your watch. He will be able to give you some idea. I understand that the Southern Cross is a fast ship."

Ferdy groaned, for he remembered that his atlas showed an awful wide stretch of ocean between North America and the Asiatic Continent. He declared once more that he wished he was dead, but at the same time he was not anxious to be thrown overboard. The weather held fair for several weeks, and the boys were not seasick a bit. The vessel made good progress on her voyage. Then there came a change and the Southern Cross ran into a gale. It lasted three days, and during that time both lads were sick enough to feel that they didn't care much what happened to them. Ferdy was the worst of the two, but he pulled through with the return of pleasant weather. After that the weather held fine for a whole month, at the end of which time the boys had become pretty fair sailors in a way. What Ferdy learned was often driven into him with a rope's end, for his instructors had no mercy on him. Clif did not escape many a hiding and knockdown himself, but as he showed a willingness to do what he was told, he got off fairly easy.

The chief mate rather liked him on the whole, and had forgotten his agreement with Mr. Jaycox to make away with the lad on the first opportunity. The rascal was quite tickled over the miserable life led by Ferdy. He figured that it was a fitting punishment toward the ship-chandler for conspiring to put his stepson out of the way. The next gale the Southern Cross ran into was a corker. It raged for five days, and at one time it seemed uncertain whether the ship would ride it out. She did, however, and after that the weather moderated. It was still blowing hard under a murky sky, when suddenly the lookout man shouted:

"Sail ho!"

"Where away?" cried the captain, springing into the main chains and mounting a few strands of the ratlines.

"Two points on the port bow," came back the reply.

"Run up, Mr. Brandon, and see what you can make of her," said the skipper to the chief mate.

Jude mounted the ratlines with the glass, and presently reported that the distant sail was a partially dismasted craft flying a Union Jack upside down, as a signal of distress, from her damaged foremast. The Southern Cross was immediately headed for the wreck. In the course of an hour they drew close enough to the vessel to make out that she was in a pretty bad way. She was evidently a brig, though only the foremast was standing half way up, the other

two masts having been reduced to mere stumps. The greater part of her bulwarks had been smashed, and everything on deck carried away. She lay so low in the water, and moved so sluggishly to the action of the sea, that she appeared to be either waterlogged, or on the point of sinking. The glasses showed not a sign of life aboard of her. The skipper ordered the lashings off one of the quarter boats, and directed the chief officer to put off to the derelict and see if any one was aboard of her. When the wreck was within half a mile, Jude selected his boat's crew, and Clif was one of them. Then to the lad's surprise Ferdy was called upon to go along, too.

The boat containing Clif, Ferdy and Brandon was pulled over to the derelict, as it proved she was. In one of the cabins an unconscious man was found. Evidently he was suffering some sort of disease. Ordering the boys to look into the forecabin and see if any other person was aboard the vessel, Brandon and the sailor carried the sick man and put him into the boat from the Southern Cross. Then the sailor and Brandon jumped in and pulled for their vessel, leaving the two boys aboard the derelict. The moment the boat touched the Southern Cross she was pulled on board and the ship sailed away, leaving Clif and Ferdy to their fate.

Great was the boys' dismay when they found they were marooned on a leaking vessel.

Clif took it less to heart than did Ferdy, who was frightened stiff. A storm arose, which lasted all night, and the boys were pretty well done up by the time it let up, which was well along in the next morning. Both boys had not been able to sleep any during the night. When things got quiet they went up on deck. They had passed the night in one of the staterooms. When they reached the deck and looked about them they discovered what looked like land over toward the east. All day they scanned the line of apparent land and at night fell asleep. When morning dawned they awoke to find an island close ahead. They had found a full supply of provisions aboard the derelict, and were able to satisfy their hunger. There was a deep cove which their vessel was headed for and the boys hoped she would enter it and terminate her cruise for good.

CHAPTER VII.—Ashore.

The boys forget their breakfast in their eagerness to see if the wreck would actually pass in through the passage or run ashore on the white beach outside. The fact did not occur to them that the unusual depth of the derelict in the sea might operate again it reaching the island at all. That is, it might run aground some way from the surf line. Undoubtedly this would have happened if the wreck was headed for the beach. The constant ingress and egress of the sea through the passage for years on years had deepened the channel to such an extent that a heavily laden craft could have slipped in. The derelict, however, was so low in the water, that had it been a foot deeper it never could have made it. As it was, as it sailed through its bottom scraped the sand in places and barely succeeded in making the passage. Then it floated aimlessly about

on the comparatively still surface of the sheltered lagoon and finally came to rest on the sandy bottom within fifty feet of the inner beach.

"This is the end of our cruise," said Cliff, "unless the wreck should be carried out again when the tide changes. To prevent that for the present we had better make a rope fast to the winch forward, carry the end ashore and tie it to that rock yonder, or the tree behind it."

"Let's eat first," said Ferdy.

"No," said Cliff. "We've got to swim to the beach, and it's better to go in the water before we eat."

"I can't swim," said Ferdy.

"I thought you could. You're a pretty sailor. Where would you have been had you fallen overboard from the Southern Cross?"

"I would have gone to Davy Jones' locker," grinned Ferdy, who could afford to make light of what had never happened to him.

"That puts the job of tying the wreck up to me. Come forward and help me get that coil of rope out of the fok's'l," said Cliff.

The rope was hauled out to the fore-castle deck and one end securely fastened to the winch. Then Cliff got out of his clothes, tied the other end under his arms, and diving into the water swam to the beach. The rope was plenty long enough to reach the tree, and to it Cliff tied the end he had brought with him. Pulling it taut it formed a sort of tight-rope running from the base of the tree to the bow of the wreck. Instead of swimming back Cliff pulled himself back along the rope. Resuming his clothes, he and Ferdy went to breakfast. After the meal, which they lost no time over, the boys returned to the bows, squatted down there and surveyed the island, which was of a semi-tropical nature. It appeared formed of a succession of hills merging into a central one higher than the rest. Out of the masses of verdure shot palms, cocoanut and plantain trees, not to mention other varieties. A thin stream of water, having its rise somewhere on the island, ran down into the lagoon.

"I hope that's fresh water," said Cliff. "I've been aching for a real drink. White wine is all very well in its way, but a continuous performance of it grows tiresome on the palate. We've had nothing else to drink since we've been aboard of this derelict, and I'm bound to say that I'm tied of it."

"I wouldn't mind having some real water myself," said Ferdy. "It looks good from here."

In the near distance appeared a grove of long-leaved bananas, but the fruit was so well concealed that the boys could not see it from where they sat. On the whole the island was a pretty sight, and it seemed a haven of rest to the young Californians after their long and varied experience at sea.

"When you're ready to go ashore you can slide off on that rope," said Cliff.

"Can't we build a raft and go ashore like Robinson Crusoe?" said Ferdy.

"What's the use? It's only about fifty feet. Just a nice little swim."

"For you, yes; but not for me. How do you know but there might be a shark or two around?"

"I never thought of sharks. Well, perhaps we'd better build a little raft, not only for your accommodation, but to avoid the possibility of a

shark catching me. If you were left alone here you wouldn't know what to do. Come on, we'll get out the carpenter's chest, yank off the state-room doors and make a raft of them."

The boys set to work and in the course of three hours produced a substantial raft which would enable them to sail about the lagoon by pushing it with a pole. They easily launched it from the deck into the water after clearing away the jagged remains of the shattered bulwark. As both boys were eager to explore the island they lost no time in leaving the wreck—for that purpose. As they did not know but they might run up against unfriendly natives who lived on the island—though, as far as they could make out from the derelict, the place appeared to be uninhabited—Cliff took a rifle and two revolvers they found on board with him and Ferdy also took a couple of six-shooters.

"We want to be on the safe side," said Cliff. "It is always best to be prepared for emergencies."

"That's right," agreed Ferdy.

"A fine-looking island like this one is almost certain to be inhabited," said Cliff. "If it isn't I shall be surprised. As the natives will have no fear of two boys like us there is no particular reason why they shouldn't act in a friendly way toward us."

"Unless they happened to be cannibals."

"There are mighty few cannibals these days, and those kind of natives live further to the south. The British pretty well exterminated them and the missionaries taught the rest of them better manners. We can leave the cannibal idea out of our thoughts, but nevertheless we may meet natives who do not take kindly to outsiders."

"What would they do to us?"

"I haven't the least idea. They would have to let us hang around till a vessel turned up and took us off, for I don't see what good it would do them to make prisoners of us, for they'd have the trouble of feeding us."

"They might kill us."

"I hope such an idea wouldn't enter their heads. However, there is no use worrying about something that might not happen. We will hope that the island is not inhabited; but for fear that it is we will go about cautiously. I don't believe in taking any more chances than I can help."

"While we are away the natives, if there are any, are likely to spy out this wreck and board it. They will carry off all our food, and everything else they can lay their hands on. Don't you think it would be a good idea to take the stuff on shore and hide it?"

"We might take some of it, but no matter where we put it the inhabitants would nose it out."

"How would they?"

"They'd see our tracks and follow them. I think we had better do some exploring first of all to find out the lay of the land."

Ferdy took a hatchet, as Cliff thought they might need it, and also a knife, and thus provided with abundant means of defence they got on the raft and poled their craft to the beach, where they tied it to a tree.

"Shall we follow the shore or go into the interior?" asked Ferdy.

"We'll follow the shore, for if there is a na-

tive village we are likely to find it near the water though, of course, that isn't certain," said Clif.

So they started to circumnavigate the island on foot in order to see about how large it was in circumference. The beach was formed of hard, white sand and afforded easy walking. It was very wide even at high tide. The tide was now on the ebb, which showed the boys it was high when their wreck floated into the lagoon, otherwise it wouldn't have got in. Under such circumstances it wasn't likely to get out again except at the top of the tide, and not then while it was tied to the tree. The vegetation came down and overlapped the sandy edge. Coconut trees grew at frequent intervals, and the boys could see the nuts in clusters at the top.

"I should like a coconut," said Ferdy, eyeing the fruit, wistfully.

"Climb up and get one, then; you're a sailor."

"Why don't you do it? You're a better sailor than I am."

Clif started up the smooth, tall trunk and found it was no easy job. He stuck it out manfully, though he frequently slipped back a yard. Finally he reached the broad leaves and with the knife severed half a dozen of the nuts which fell to the ground. He dug out a hole in the end of one of the nuts to see how ripe it was. He found it full of milk and handed it to Ferdy to sample.

"That's fine," said his companion, after taking a long quaff at the contents.

Clif then finished it and afterwards split the nut open with the hatchet. They ate some of the white interior, chewing it to a pulp and then spitting it out. Leaving the other nuts on the sand where they could find them later they continued on their way. They saw many breadfruit trees, but did not recognize them. After going half-way around the island, or to a point opposite where the lagoon lay, they came to a narrow creek which compelled them to walk into the island a bit to get around it. Then it was they found a grove of bananas. Ferdy viewed the ripening fruit with great satisfaction.

"Say, we'll have a picnic here. There are bananas to burn," he said, grabbing a big one and commencing to eat.

"You mean to eat. Nobody burns bananas, though they often cook them."

The boys stopped there a while to rest and eat some of the luscious fruit.

The boys continued on along the shore, peering into the interior as they went, but saw nothing that indicated the presence of natives. The island was simply one mass of semi-tropical vegetation, but without a bird or animal of any kind so far as they could see. The only sounds that reached their ears was the musical murmur of the slight surf on the shore. What the limited interior would reveal when investigated was a matter to be decided later. It was past noon when the boys came in sight of the lagoon again.

"Here we are almost back again at our starting point," said Clif. "We have not met with a solitary native, nor seen a canoe or other craft which they would be likely to have. I'd be willing to bet there is nobody here but ourselves. The most suitable place for a native village is along the shore of the lagoon itself, and no such thing exists there."

"I'm glad we are the sole inhabitants," said Ferdy. "We can do as we please then, and run no risk of trouble."

The lagoon was just the same as they left it, except that the tide was way out, and the raft hard and fast aground on the sand. The wreck was resting on the bottom, too, for she was heeled a bit to port. The boys were not particularly eager to return to the derelict, having filled up on fruit along their route. They took shelter under a bunch of trees from the heat of the sun and after talking a while dozed off to sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.—What Happened In the Night.

They slept through the heat of the day and awoke much refreshed. The tide was pretty well up again and the raft nearly afloat. They put off to the wreck, as they felt the need of something more substantial than fruit, and were soon eating their dinner in the pantry. After the meal they returned to the beach, secured the raft and started to see what the interior of the little island looked like. They found vegetation everywhere running wild. The grove of tall plants they had seen from the wreck proved to be another banana collection, rich in fruit ripening in the sun. Some of the stems, formed of closely compacted sheaves of leaves, rose to a height of nearly thirty feet. The leaves were from six to ten feet long, and fully 2 foot broad. They were pushing their way along when they suddenly came upon a trodden path that had evidently been made by human beings, and quite a number of them. This path was so plainly marked, that there could be no doubt about it having been passed over scores of times. Furthermore, the people who had marked the path were shod with shoes, though not shoes of the civilized kind. That fact proved they were not natives of the savage, untutored variety. The boys stopped short and looked at the path. It led toward the lagoon in one direction and across the island toward the highest or central hill in the other.

"This looks as if people were accustomed to come here, even if they do not remain here right along," said Clif. "We'll follow this path and see where it takes us. The persons who made it clearly had some object in going this way. And they have been here more than once, more than a dozen times, unless there was a big bunch of them."

"I don't like the looks of it," said Ferdy, holding back.

"Never mind what you like, we have got to look into it. We want to learn what we may expect to see if we remain here any time."

"I think it would be safer for us to go back and try and get afloat again."

"What, on the wreck?"

"Yes."

"Brace up. I'm not going to run away from what might be only a shadow."

"We may run into a village of the chaps who made this trail."

"I don't believe it. I don't think there is anybody on the island at this moment but ourselves."

Clif started ahead, and Ferdy, afraid to remain behind, followed him, but with considerable reluc-

tance. There was no such thing as missing the path, it was too clearly defined. How recently any one had been over it it was impossible to say. As it led to the lagoon in the opposite direction, and there was no evidence of footmarks on the sand there, Clif figured that it might have been a month since people had used it, though it might only have been a few days.

"Keep your eyes skinned, old man, to the right and left, as we go along," he said.

"Oh, lord, I'm sure we're looking for trouble," said Ferdy.

"Don't cross a bridge before you come to it," said Clif, cheerfully.

"I wish I had your nerve."

"What you lack you should cultivate. That's what the phrenologist told me when he examined my head."

"What did he find in your head?" asked Ferdy, curiously.

"Brains. The bumps showed that."

"Bumps!"

"Yes. I have lots of bumps all over my dome when my brains are forcing my roof up in place."

"Your head must be soft, then."

"No, it isn't. It's as hard as a cocoanut. Look here," said Clif, stopping. "Feel those bumps behind my ears. That shows pugnacity, push, energy, and so forth, if properly developed. If over-developed, a quarrelsome disposition, bad temper, and so on. If not properly developed a fellow is short of sand, a physical coward, and so forth. Let me feel yours. You need cultivation. If a savage suddenly showed himself before us and glared fiercely at you you'd run."

"What would you do?"

"I'd stand my ground."

"Bet you a dollar you'd run."

"Bet your small change first. Come on."

The path led in a winding way upward to the highest elevation, then around through the vegetation to the eastern end of the island, where it ended on a wide, grassy shelf in front of a cavernous opening.

"We are evidently on the verge of some discovery," said Clif.

"You aren't going in there, are you?" faltered Ferdy.

"Why not? I'm game to see this thing out."

"You're a fool!" cried Ferdy.

"Maybe I am, but I don't know it. They say 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' No fear of angels coming here. Brace up and follow me like a little man."

"But I say it looks funny in there. I don't want to go."

"What's funny about it?"

"Look at those white things hanging about."

"Don't be afraid. They're not alive."

Clif pushed inside, but Ferdy remained outside. The floor of the cave was hard and gritty. Clif went up to one of the white, irregular columns and was surprised to find that it appeared to be made out of coral. He broke a piece off and examined it.

"It is coral," he said. "This must be a coral island. We are further south than I supposed."

He walked around examining the cave. The interior was entirely composed of coral. As coral is the work of a certain kind of marine insect, who build and die in their work, slowly forming

islands from a base far down in the sea, this island had taken millions of years in its formation, and yet there are people who assert the earth is only six thousand years or so old. Geology proves differently. The further Clif penetrated the cave the more wonderful it looked to him. The coral insects had worked in an eccentric way to form it as it was. Much of the coral had been knocked away to form a passage to the interior, which ran downward, and Clif wondered what he would find further on. He looked back and saw Ferdy standing at the entrance, afraid to follow him.

"He's a coward; but that is nothing new. He always has shown the white feather ever since I've known him. If I should get into trouble I can expect no help from him, though he's got two loaded six-shooters, and a knife and hatchet to boot. I believe if he had a Gatling-gun he'd run before he'd open it on an enemy."

Clif kept on and soon lost sight of Ferdy and the entrance. He saw nothing to alarm him as he proceeded. Outside of the fact that a smooth path was worn in the coral floor there was nothing else to indicate the meaning of it. He followed the path with his hand on one of his revolvers, for he had left the rifle on the wreck that afternoon. His feet, being bare, made no sound on the floor. The further he got from the entrance the gloomier the cave became, until it became absolutely dark. Not having a match to strike a light with, he decided to retrace his steps and wait till next day to continue the exploration of the cave. Accordingly he returned to the entrance and rejoined Ferdy.

"What did you find out?"

"Nothing as far as I went. I would have kept on if I had had a light."

"How far did you go?"

"Fifty or sixty feet downward."

"I don't believe there is anything in there."

"I don't know about that. Men have worn a path going to and from this cave, so it stands to reason there must be, or have been, some purpose in it. They wouldn't have done it for the fun of the thing."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Come back with the lantern that's hanging in the pantry."

"Right away?"

"No. Not till to-morrow. In the meanwhile we'll look over the rest of the island."

And they did. They found it simply a green solitude, plentifully supplied with fruit, without bird or beast, or the sign of a human. There was nothing to arouse their curiosity except the mystery of the trail which ran from the head of the lagoon to the coral cave, and Clif was fully resolved to learn all about it if he could. They returned to the wreck with a bunch of ripe bananas and the cocoanuts Clif obtained that morning. When it grew dark they ate their supper, and, feeling tired, turned in. Around midnight something aroused Clif and he sat up and listened. He heard something moving stealthily around the cabin.

"Is that you, Ferdy?" he called out.

The sounds stopped.

"Who's there?" he asked.

He got no reply. That settled the matter. Clif seized the revolver under his pillow and sprang

out of his bunk. Taking a match from the shelf he struck it and flashed a light into the cabin. Not a soul was there. He rushed over to Ferdy's room and found that youth fast asleep. Then he darted up the companion stairs. There was no one on deck. He looked shoreward. He could have sworn he saw a dark figure plunge into the vegetation at the head of the beach. The thing was gone before he could make certain of it, but the impression that he had seen a moving object remained.

Clif kept his eye on the shore for an hour. Nothing appeared, so he returned to the cabin, shut and locked his stateroom door, and turned in again.

CHAPTER IX.—In the Depths of the Coral Cave.

He slept through till morning without being disturbed again. The event of the night induced him to postpone visiting the cave that day as he had intended.

"We had a visitor last night, Ferdy," said Clif while they were eating their breakfast.

"What's that?" said Ferdy, pausing as he was about to swallow a mouthful of potted tongue.

"Somebody came aboard in the night to take a look at the wreck."

"You don't mean it," gasped his companion, turning pale.

"I do. I heard him moving around in the cabin and called out thinking it was you. I'm sorry I didn't flash a match before hailing the intruder."

"Oh, heavens! What are we going to do? We'll be murdered in our sleep."

"Don't worry ahead of time."

"It will be too late to worry after we are dead."

"We've got to die some time."

"I'm not anxious to slip my cable."

"There may be only one man on the island, and we ought to be able to handle him."

"What did he look like?"

"I didn't see him."

Clif told about his experience of the night and Ferdy said he was sure they were in for trouble unless they cut the wreck loose and left the island.

"I don't believe we can get clear of this lagoon now we're in here," said Clif. "I've noticed that the wreck appears to have fastened to the bottom as if it intends to stay here for good. It is high tide now, and we are hard and fast aground. To prevent that chap coming aboard again we'll remove the line from the tree. That will keep him away unless he can swim."

Ferdy, however, was not reassured by that. He declared they were bound to be put out of the way.

"Lock yourself in your stateroom, and keep your revolver ready for action," said Clif.

After breakfast Clif poled himself ashore on the raft and released the mooring rope, which appeared to be useless now that the wreck appeared to have anchored itself to the bottom of the lagoon. Clif then brought a supply of fresh water aboard and the boys clung to the derelict all that day. Ferdy locked himself in that night and did not feel over safe at that. Clif did the same, and slept till midnight with one eye open, as the saying is. After that his sleep became deeper. If the wreck was again visited neither had had any evidence of the fact in the morning. That morn-

ing Clif poled the raft out to the entrance of the lagoon and hunted the ledge of rocks there for shellfish. It was low tide then and he found a big mess of the fish. He made a fire on the beach and cooked the fish in a pan he found in the pantry. With the addition of salt and pepper the fish went very well indeed. After breakfast he took the lantern and his revolver and told Ferdy he was going to explore the cave.

"If there is any one living there I'm going to find the fact out," he said. "You mount guard with the rifle till I come back."

"Suppose there are several people in the cave and they catch you, what are you going to do?" said Ferdy.

"Do the best I can."

"You're foolish to go monkeying around that cave. You may never come back, and then what will become of me?"

"Ferdy, you make me weary. Why can't you get some backbone into you. You put me in mind of a jelly-fish."

In spite of all Ferdy said Clif started on his expedition. He reached the entrance of the cave without meeting anything out of the way. Lighting the lantern he entered the place, and with a revolver in his hand he started ahead. After he left the entrance behind him the light of the lantern, flashing on the coral, threw shadows all around, so that Clif could easily imagine that he saw a dozen figures hiding about the interior watching his advance. He realized that his position might be one of danger, but that did not deter him. He was bent on learning the mystery of the cave if there was one. So he resolutely went ahead, and no one attempted to stay his progress. The shadows danced before and around him, but they were only shadows of the coral pillars reflected against the coral walls, and he gave them no attention after he had satisfied himself there was nothing human about them. He penetrated a hundred yards into the depth of the cave, to a point on the level of the sea, and he was wondering if after all there was anything in the cave, when he suddenly came to an open space quite clear of coral obstructions. In the center of this chamber he was amazed to see a huge, fat Chinese idol, all of twenty feet high and proportionately round. Its head almost touched the roof, and it squatted cross-legged on a square pedestal. The whole thing appeared to be built of wood. The face and hands were of a yellowish brown, the eyes were made either of glass or something similar, a long thin mustache hung down on either side of the mouth, Chinese fashion, and the carved garments were painted in diverse colors, with no regard whatever for taste. Altogether it was a fantastic and rather disgusting-looking object.

"Well, I'll be blessed!" ejaculated Clif. "A great Chinese idol way down in this cave. Rather a peculiar place for such a thing. This island must be somewhere off the coast of China, and, of course, is north of the Philippines in that case. If I recollect my atlas correctly there are a number of small, scattered islands to the east of China in the Pacific, some of them as far off as 1,200 or more miles. The furthest out are directly to the north of the Ladrões, and those islands are all of 1,500 miles east of the Philippines, extending below the 20th line of longitude. Coconut, bread-

fruit and such trees grow on the Ladrões, which are covered with a perpetual verdure, and the same conditions exist on this island. Assuming that China is about 1,000 miles or so from here, it seems strange that I should find a big idol so far out in the Pacific. Never heard of such a thing in all my reading, and I have read a good deal about this part of the world."

Clif flashed the lantern light all over the image, front, back and sides. He expected to see one or more Chinamen spring out from some place and confront him, for he argued that the idol probably had guardians, but nothing of the kind happened. Not a sound of any kind reached his ears. The cave and its idol occupant were apparently deserted.

"The meaning of that well-worn path from the lagoon up here is now accounted for," thought the boy. "This is some secret idol house which is occasionally visited by devotees of Confucius. That figure is doubtless a special Chinese god, maybe one who is supposed to look after the interests of Celestial sailors, seeing its place of abode is so far off the coast."

That Clif's deductions were very far from the real truth he learned later. There was nothing whatever in common between the Chinese religion and the purposes of this idol. It represented the worst feature of American politics—graft. Graft enforced by Black Hand methods. Though nearly fifteen hundred miles out at sea its power was recognized and feared in every corner of the Chinese Empire. No wealthy Mongolian merchant or pampered official, though hedged in by every known protective method, was safe from the grasping clutch of the secret society whose headquarters Clif had intruded upon. Across the breast of the idol in blood red paint was revealed the device of the order—a Chinese block letter representing a word. That word carried terror wherever it appeared, even among those not subject to its blighting influence. A letter signed by that red word passed into the hand of a rich Chinaman, through a mysterious channel, brought a ready response, since the alternative was death—death that came secretly and like a flash from the clear sky. And that there might be no doubt why death reached that particular victim, the red device was carved on the dead man's back.

Clif viewed that terrible device calmly, for he had never heard of it before, nor of the secret order it stood for. To him it meant nothing more than the name of the idol, or something connected with the Celestial religion. He did not dream that he was standing in a position of terrible personal peril. That if he was caught there his life was forfeited and upon his back would be carved that Chinese letter, even though he were a Caucasian. As he looked over the hideous image he was like a person investigating the contents of a barrel of gunpowder and holding a lighted candle carelessly in his fingers. Still all might have gone well with him, for there is a divinity that watches over conscious and unconscious foes, had he not accidentally touched a secret spring in the back of the idol. This caused a door to open in his face, and his curiosity to inspect what was inside the great image induced him to step in.

He found himself within the hollow base on which the idol rested. This space was perhaps six feet square and as high, in form of a cube. A

trapdoor was in the center of it. Clif lifted it and saw below a short, rude ladder.

"Well, I may as well see this thing out while I'm here," he thought, so down the ladder he went.

He landed in a small coral chamber with a passage, formed by the hand of man, leaning upward in a gentle rise. It went straight ahead and Clif followed it.

"This is a strange adventure," said the boy to himself. "I'll have something to tell Ferdy when I get back."

Undoubtedly he would—if he got back. As he had met with no one so far all appeared to be clear sailing before him. Notwithstanding the recollection of the midnight visitor of two nights before he did not believe he would encounter any one during his underground investigations. The passage went on for a distance of sixty feet and terminated in a small chamber fully furnished in Chinese fashion. It was illuminated by a brass lamp containing oil in which a wick floated. On a couch reposed an elaborately attired Chinaman, fast asleep. He was a man of herculean build, and his yellow countenance, even in repose, wore a sinister and repulsive look. At the sight of the massive Mongolian, Clif started back in some slight alarm. He was taken by surprise, and he did not like the looks of the fellow, nor of the huge, long Chinese sword which lay within his reach.

It looked like the sword of a Celestial executioner such as he had seen in pictures. There was a collection of other kinds of weapons hanging around the walls, the bareness of which was hidden by the soft folds of silk fabric of rich colors. The floor was covered with heavy matting, and the ceiling was draped with the same kind of silks as the walls. Sandalwood boxes lay about the corners and a stand of sandalwood stood near the head of the couch. On this rested a long Chinese pipe with a small hole in the center which indicated that it was used for opium. Indeed, there could be little doubt about that from the small spirit lamp, the box of dark-colored paste, and the spoon-headed needle that lay beside the pipe. The giant guardian of the idol, in common with the run of his countrymen, and the inhabitants of southeast Asia and the Malay Archipelago, was a habitual opium smoker, and could use as much of it in a day as would kill a dozen or twenty people unused to it.

For the information of our readers who are unacquainted with the method of smoking the drug, which comes principally from Hindoostan and Asiatic Turkey, being the solidified juice of a species of poppy plant cultivated on a large scale in those countries, we will say that the smoker, who is always lying, or at least reclining, takes a portion of opium about the size of a pea on the end of a spoon-headed needle, heats it at a lamp, and then places it in the bowl of the pipe, the pellet of opium having been previously perforated by the needle. He then brings the opium to the flame of the lamp, inhales the smoke in several inspirations, and is then ready to repeat the process with a fresh quantity of opium until the desired intoxication ensues. In the case of many temperaments opium produces such agreeable effects that numbers of persons are led to use it habitually, and though some can use it with impunity, the majority of victims succumb to all the evils of nar-

cotic poisoning in the course of time, their very looks showing the effect of the inroad of the drug.

It is much to be regretted that the practice has extended to civilized communities, and is the reason why this country has placed a high duty on its importation; but unfortunately once a person is inoculated with the habit he will pay any price to get it. For that reason young people particularly who are tempted to try just one smoke to see how it goes are warned to beware, in capital letters, of that first step, lest it sow the seed that ends in an early grave. Clif barely glanced at the opium outfit, for he had often seen it before in courses of sundry peregrinations about Chinatown in San Francisco, and decided that it was the part of prudence to withdraw before the Chinese giant should awake and discover him there. Unfortunately for him the Mongolian was not as fast asleep as he looked to be. Something told him he was not alone and he opened his almond-shaped and glittering eyes. The moment they fell on the American boy he straightened up with a rapidity unexpected of his huge bulk. He uttered an ejaculation in Chinese which Clif did not understand, reached for the long sword and sprang to his feet, drawing the blade as he did so. With a terrible roar of concentrated rage he swung the blade in the air and sprang at the boy. In another instant Clif's head would have been severed from his body by one sweep of the weapon. But Clif was not taken off his guard. He saw his danger, raised his revolver and fired point-blank at the giant.

CHAPTER X.—The Treasure of the Coral Cave.

The bullet did its work effectively and Clif's life was saved. The glittering sword fell to the matting and the big Mongolian followed with a crash upon the couch, his great legs sprawling toward the boy. The smoke mingled with the perfume of sandalwood and other Asiatic smells making the air indistinct for a minute or two. The idea of killing a human being was not particularly cheerful to Clif, but where it was a question of self-defense he could not blame himself. Anyway he was not sure the man was dead, or even dying. It would almost seem that one bullet could not blot out the life of such a ponderous personage. Had the bullet reached his heart his size would have counted for nothing. Clif stood and stared at the prostrate Mongolian. The man's hand was clutched to his breast, and was reddened by the blood that bubbled from the wound. Not a move came from him. The scintillating eyes that had flashed death on the boy were closed.

The power in his strong arms had wilted. He was now incapable of harming even a fly. Clif's first thought was to withdraw, but he next to investigate the room. He followed the second impulse. Wondering what the sack and chests contained he lifted the lid of the largest one, for they had no lock or key. To his amazement he found the box full of golden Chinese ingots, each one worth at least \$500. The next box was teeming with gold money, while the third was partly full of both ingots and money. Altogether a very considerable treasure was represented in the chests. Clif's mouth watered at the sight of such a fortune. He wondered where it came from. Every

dollar of it was an enforced contribution from some unwilling but helpless giver. And what use was it all to be put to? What was the idea of piling it up here on this lone island over a thousand miles from the Celestial dominions where not a penny of it could be spent? Perhaps the man Clif had shot down knew. He was the guardian of the treasure—the master mind of the order. In a big book formed of rice paper which lay on a stand were lists of the rich and successful men of China. From those lists victims were selected here and there and demands made on them in mysterious ways for so much money. Those demands were invariably met and the money found its way to the island.

"My gracious! there is a pile in this room. If Ferdy and I had even a small sloop that was seaworthy we could get away with the whole of it before the next bunch of Mongolians arrive to pay their respects to the idol in the cave below. I dare say there is more than \$100,000 in those chests. It would make both of us pretty rich, though Ferdy is scarcely entitled to an even half, for he wasn't game enough to come with me."

Clif looked at the rascally Chinaman somewhat dubious about approaching close enough to him to see whether he was dead or not. He finally did so, and feeling around his heart saw that it was beating. The wound was still bleeding. As he could not tell whether the bullet wound would prove fatal or not, Clif decided to get busy and carry as much of the treasure from the room and the cave as he could while the opportunity offered. He tore a big piece of the silk from the wall and put as many ingots in it as he could carry. Then taking the precaution to drag the wicked long sword down into the place where the idol stood and hide it there, he started for the entrance of the coral cave. He had to rest two or three times on the way, but he finally reached the open air. He did not attempt to carry the gold to the wreck, but dumped it into the vegetation near the cave where it could not be detected. It took some nerve to go back to that underground room for more of the treasure, but Clif argued that this was the best time to secure it. So back he went and found things as he had left them. It took six trips to empty the box of ingots, and then Clif started on the money. He had got away with half of it, when on returning to the room he heard the Chinaman groaning inside and uttering imprecations in the Celestial language. He decided not to show himself to the wounded giant for fear of complications. Strong beasts in their dying agonies are capable of doing a great deal of damage, why not this fellow? So Clif returned the way he came, blocking the door of the base of the idol with a piece of coral, and then leaving the cave to return to the wreck. To prove the truth of the wonderful story he had to relate to Ferdy, he filled his pockets with money and ingots, repaired to the shore of the lagoon and polled himself out to the wreck.

"You've been away a mighty long time," said his companion, greeting him with an air of great relief. "I've been all worked up about you. I felt sure that you had been captured, and perhaps put to death. It's time to eat, and while we are doing so you can tell me what you saw in the back of the cave, for I guess you must have seen something unusual to be so long away."

"Yes, I saw something that would have taken all the starch out of you, though you haven't got a very large supply of that article in your composition."

"What was it?"

"A murderous looking Chinaman all of seven feet high."

"You're joking, aren't you?"

"No, there was no joke about it. He had a sword more than a yard long, and when he woke up and saw me he whipped it out in a way that meant business. But for the fact that I had a cocked revolver in my hand, you'd never seen me again alive," said Clif.

"What did you do—shoot him?"

"I did."

"Then he's dead?"

"No, he isn't dead, or wasn't when I left the cave. I fancy it will take more than one bullet to put him to sleep unless it was planted in the right place. He is badly wounded, though, and might die before morning."

"Let us hope he does. Now tell me your story from the start."

Clif did so, and Ferdy's eyes bulged when his associate described the big Chinese idol in the depths of the coral cave.

"Wasn't you frightened when you saw it?" he asked.

"Certainly not. It was nothing but a great wooden image."

Clif went on to tell him what it looked like, and how in some way he touched a spring that opened a door in the base. He described how he entered the compartment, descended the ladder, and followed the passage till he reached the room where the giant Mongolian lay on the couch. Then he told what followed—the shooting of the Celestial and the discovery of the golden treasure. Ferdy accepted everything as so except the treasure. He declared that Clif was fooling him on that.

"Don't you believe it?" said his comrade.

"Sure not. If you'd found so much gold you'd have brought it away with you."

"How could I have brought away the contents of two and a half chests?"

"Well, you'd brought as much as you could carry."

"I brought some samples to show you. There they are," and Clif pulled out a handful of gold coins and several ingots and laid them down for Ferdy to look over. Ferdy's eyes stuck out at the sight of the stuff.

"You found two boxes and a half of this gold?" he said.

"Yes."

"Heavens, we'll be rich."

"We! What have you got to do with it?"

"I get half of it, don't I?"

"Do you think you're entitled to any of it?"

"Why not?"

"I admire your nerve. I went into the cave alone because you refused to go with me, and I discovered the treasure at the risk of my life, and you coolly ask me to share it with you. If your pluck amounts to nothing, there is nothing the matter with your gall."

"Aren't you going to give me any at all?"

"Yes, I will let you in on some of it—more than you deserve, but you'll have to earn it."

"How?"

"By helping me get it to the wreck."

"Must I go down into that cave?"

"I've got about half of it outside the cave. That's why I was so long away. You can help me fetch that part aboard here. After that we'll talk about getting the rest of it."

Ferdy was willing to take a hand at anything that didn't take him down into the depths of the coral cave. He didn't want to see the wooden idol by lantern light, and he was afraid the wounded giant might catch him and cut his head off. He went ashore with Clif, each carrying a box, and they repaired to the neighborhood of the cave entrance. It took them two hours going back and forth to remove all the money and ingots to the cabin of the wreck, and they didn't get it all at that, for some of the money, and a few of the ingots, escaped them in the shrubbery. However, they had a big pile of treasure, the actual value of which they could not figure out. They amused themselves the rest of the day making canvas bags to hold the treasure. Then Clif dumped the tools out of the carpenter's chest and put the treasure in their place.

"Now we'll go to supper," he said, locking the chest and dropping the key in his pocket.

CHAPTER XI.—In A Tight Fix.

It is certainly a pleasant reflection to know that you have a chest comfortably packed with golden ingots and foreign coin which may be intrinsically worth a hundred thousand dollars, but when you consider that you are anchored fast and hard on a lone island several thousand miles from your native land, and at least 1,000 miles from the nearest foreign port in the other direction, the treasure you possess does not seem to be much use to you. That was the situation Clif was in. With all the wealth that was his he could not purchase a nickel's worth of anything with it. Still, he had the satisfaction of knowing he was a sort of imitation Monte Cristo, and that if he could hold on to the treasure of the coral cave he might expect in time to remove it with himself to the land of the Golden West, where it would do him some good.

Ferdy was extremely anxious to find out what proportion of the treasure was coming his way. He hoped Clif would deal generously with him, because they were companions in hard luck, and Clif assured him that he would treat him "white." They spent the evening talking over their chances of getting away from the island. Ferdy suggested that they build a substantial raft from the timbers of the rest.

"A raft won't sink, even in a storm," he said.

"I know," admitted Clif, "but you can't manage it to any extent even with a sail. If we build one, and trusted ourselves to it, we might float for weeks about on the Pacific, and finally run out of food before we were so fortunate as to be rescued by some passing vessel."

"But if we stay here, a bunch of Chinamen may turn up at any moment. If they didn't disturb us when they came, they would go for us the moment they found out that the guardian of the idol was dead or desperately wounded, and a large part of the treasure gone. They would

kill us both without mercy, for how could we stand them off?"

Clif admitted that Ferdy had some ground for his contention. After thinking the matter over he said that he guessed the safest thing for them was to hunt up some hiding place on the island.

"How are we going to find a hiding place on such a small island?" asked his comrade.

"By looking for it."

"And if there is none, what are we going to do?"

"Make one."

"How?"

"We'll consider that after we have looked the island thoroughly over. If we can find a cave where we can take refuge, we could defend it with our revolver and the rifle, for we have plenty of ammunition. The Chinamen are no great fighters, and I see no reason why we couldn't stand them off," said Clif.

They retired for the night fully resolved to carry out their plans next day. They were up early, and after scanning the sea as far as they could make out for a sail, they ate their breakfast, and then set out to hunt up a suitable place for a retreat in case of the emergency they anticipated. The entire morning was passed going over all parts of the island, but they failed to find a cave, or anything approaching one. There was only one cave on the island, and that was the big coral one. After dinner the boys went to work to place the cabin in a state of complete defense, and it took the rest of the day. Next morning Clif decided to venture into the coral cave to see whether the Mongolian giant was still alive. If he was dead, he and Ferdy could take possession of the rest of the treasure. Ferdy protested against his taking the risk. Clif, however, was determined to venture, and Ferdy accompanied him as far as the entrance to the cave. He couldn't be persuaded to go in and see the idol.

"I'll do it if you bring me back word that the man is dead," he said.

"You're a poor side partner, Ferdy, when there is a spice of danger around. If my friend Joe Thompson were here I'd feel more confidence in the ultimate issue of things."

Thus speaking, Clif entered the coral cave. He found the secret door in the base of the idol as he had left it, and leaving the lantern on the floor outside, he descended the ladder and crept cautiously forward through the passage, his bare feet making no sound. The oil lamp with its floating wick was still burning, and its light revealed the giant Mongolian in much the same position in which he had fallen. Drawing close to the man, he looked down into his face. His glassy, staring eyes and dropped jaw told their story plainly enough. The guardian of the treasure of the secret order had gone to answer for the crimes of which he was guilty. Having nothing to fear from the defunct occupant of the place, the boy went over the room thoroughly and found many articles of value in it. Finally he made up another bundle of money and started to leave. He hoped to be able to get Ferdy down there to assist him in carrying off the rest of it. As he was passing along the passage, the sound of a Chinese gong smote upon his startled ears.

"What does that mean?" said Clif. "Have a

bunch of Mongolians arrived? If they have, I am in a pretty pickle. They'll catch me where I have no right to be with the goods in my possession, and I hate to think what they'll do to me."

"Once more came the clang of the gong, and the sound made the boy feel anything but happy. He judged that the gong was pounded on to bring the late guardian of the idol and the treasure out of his quarters. Clif wondered if they had made a prisoner of Ferdy, or whether that youth had observed their approaching in time to hide. For the third time the gong sounded, louder than ever. Clif decided that he had better retreat to the room where the dead Mongolian lay, and leave the bundle of money. Then he might make an attempt to creep out at the back of the idol and hide in the gloom of the coral wall. This plan he started to follow out. He dropped the bundle in the empty chest, and was about to regain the passage when two Chinamen appeared at the entrance and blocked his way.

CHAPTER XII.—Conclusion.

The visitors saw the giant stretched out in death, with blood on his silken garments, and uttered a terrible cry. Then they saw Clif, and a second cry rose to their lips. That they were almost paralyzed with astonishment by both facts was evident. Clif had his revolver out ready to defend himself. He moved toward the entrance, but the two Chinamen were in a position to cut him off.

"Stand back!" cried the boy, covering them with his gun.

Whether they understood his words or not, they could not fail to understand his action, and they shrank back. Clif reached the passage, darted into it and ran for his life. A moment later the two Mongolians followed him. They saw that the giant had been killed, and they associated his death with the boy they had caught in the secret chamber. Although Clif had no idea of the importance of the rascal whose career he had terminated, he did not doubt but he would receive scant mercy if captured. For that reason he put his best foot forward and easily reached the ladder before his pursuers were half way through the passage. He run up the ladder like a monkey, closed the trap-door and sprang out of the secret door. In his hurry he did not observe the presence of several Chinamen until he plunged in among them, unsetting one of them. As he rushed away, a great jabbering arose when the astonished Mongolians perceived that he was a white boy.

The whole bunch immediately gave chase. They knew the intricacies of the cave better than he, and when he found they were overhauling him, he turned and fired at one of them. The bullet wounded the Celestial in the arm, but had no effect in stopping the crowd. As he came into the light near the entrance, one of the Mongolians picked up a piece of coral and flung it at the fugitive. It caught Clif on the head and he fell on his hands and knees. Before he could regain his feet he was nabbed and surrounded. One of the Celestials pulled a piece of cord from

his pocket, and the boy was bound to a column of coral. At this point the two men who had been in the secret chamber came up and imparted the intelligence of the giant's death. This news caused tremendous excitement among the others. They flashed out their knives and glared at Clif. The boy looked for instant death at their hands.

Instead of rushing upon him and burying their knives in his body, they drew back and consulted in excited tones. The pow-wow was to decide just how they would put the boy to death. Finally they reached a decision and advanced to take him from the column of coral and drag him down to where the great idol stood. It was fitting he should be sacrificed in the presence of the guardian diety of the rascally order. But Clif was not to die the horrible death outlined for him. At that moment a naval lieutenant, followed by a bunch of armed sailors, suddenly appeared at the entrance of the coral cave. Their unexpected coming threw the members of the Chinese secret society into a state of great consternation. They scattered in all directions, most of them running into the interior of the cave, for escape by way of the entrance was impossible. Clif was as surprised as his enemies at the coming of rescuers. As the officer advanced toward him, Clif saw Ferdy at his heels. On the caps of the bluejackets the prisoner saw the name of an American war vessel of the cruiser class.

"Well, young man, we arrived in time to save you from a bad predicament, I guess," said the officer, cutting Clif free.

"You certainly did," replied the boy. "I believed it was all up with me."

"Your friend directed us to this cave when we came into the lagoon to take possession of the junk we followed out of Shanghai and then lost in a fog. We sighted her again a while ago making for this island, and gave chase. She ran into the lagoon, where she was abandoned by her crew. When we rowed in we saw your friend signaling us from the beach. I put in to see who he was, and discovered he was a boy marooned on this island with yourself. As he told me you had gone into a coral cave up here, and he believed you were in great peril, we lost no time in coming after you."

"You didn't come a moment too soon."

"I should judge so from the condition in which we found you. Now before I hear your story, I must smoke those rascals out and make prisoners of them."

"You call them rascals; I thought they were devotees of the idol that is in the cave."

"They are members of a secret band of grafters and assassins which has been and is a terror to honest Chinamen," replied the officer. "Persistent efforts have been made to discover their headquarters and break them up, but all in vain. I fancy, however, that I have struck the right scent at last. I believe this island, which is 1,300 miles from the coast of China, is where all the orders of the organization have come from. The head of the band is domiciled here."

"He is dead. I shot him," said Clif.

"Your friend said something to that effect. If so, you have done a service to the Chinese nation. Now pilot us down into the cave, as you appear to be familiar with it."

Clif did so, and Ferdy went along this time, for

he felt safe in the presence of the armed sailors. Not a Mongolian was found around the idol. But Clif knew where they had gone. The secret door was closed, and the spring could not be found. Clif located where it was, and the sailors soon broke it open. The boy led the way through the passage to the room where the bunch of Mongolians were found huddled together. They surrendered, as a matter of course, for they couldn't do anything else.

Clif pointed out the remains of the treasure. He told the officer that he and his friend had already secured possession of the larger part of it, which they laid claim to. Everything of value, including the book containing the Chinese names, was carried away by the sailors after tying the arms of the prisoners. Finally the Mongolians were marched out and the dead giant left to rot in the room which had now become his tomb. Reaching the shore, Clif saw the small American cruiser lying a mile off the island. The lieutenant took him and Ferdy to the war ship, where Clif told his story to the commander.

The commander said he saw no reason why the boys should not hold on to the treasure of the coral cave, which, on examination, he estimated to be worth over \$150,000, as the shooting of the head of the grafters was easily worth that. The balance of the treasure he decided ought to be divided among the officers and crew of the cruiser. The chest containing the greater part of the gold was carried aboard the warship, which sailed at once for Hong Kong with the two marooned lads. The story of the breaking up of the graft gang was published in the English papers in Hong Kong, the news spread all over China, bringing a sense of great relief to those Chinamen who were living in constant fear of the order. Clif changed the treasure into English money, and received a matter of nearly \$175,000. Of this sum he gave Ferdy \$50,000.

The boys then took a steamer for San Francisco, where they duly arrived. They went directly to Mr. Jaycox's store, and learned that the ship-chandler had died suddenly a month previous, and that the establishment was being run in the interest of the widow. Then they went to Alameda, where they were received as if risen from their graves, for both boys had been given up for dead. Clif and Ferdy went in partnership and bought the ship-chandlery business, which gave them occupation enough to keep them busy. The rest of their money they put into good paying San Francisco real estate, from which they drew a good income. The boys, who were once so antagonistic, got along very well together, and neither regretted that he had been so unceremoniously shipped to sea.

Next week's issue will contain "AN ERRAND BOYS FORTUNE; or, THE OFFICE OF WALL STREET SECRETS."

Agent (for gas company)—I'm sorry you think this bill is too large, sir. Would it not be a good idea if you learned how to read your own meter? Whittler—It might be if my doctor hadn't told me that I had something the matter with my heart and I must avoid all excitement.

CURRENT NEWS

GETS TWO WILD CATS

Amos George, caretaker of the game preserves of United States Senator George P. McLean, reports the trapping of two wildcats near Simsbury, Conn. The first was caught on West Mountain, one Thursday night. It was the largest specimen ever caught in this section, and Senator McLean estimated that it would weigh not far from thirty pounds. George, with some friends, was coon hunting one Friday night, when the dogs led them to one of his traps and the party witnessed the dogs in fierce combat with a smaller cat, evidently just caught. This animal weighed eighteen pounds.

HERMIT BEATEN TO DEATH WITH CUE

Farmer folk of Rockland County, N. Y., were stirred to-day by the death in Nyack Hospital of Gustavus L. Smith, sixty-one, found unconscious in a barn on his farm at the foot of Haverstraw Mountain, his skull fractured with a billiard cue. The condition of his clothing indicated a terrific struggle.

The elderly man lived like a hermit, seldom leaving his house, which neighbors said was guarded by two ferocious dogs. County authorities believe that tales of hidden wealth on the

farm, which he had occupied fifteen years, led to the attack.

A deputy sheriff who went to the farmhouse to investigate shot both dogs.

Smith was said to have had a small income from tenement house in Grand street, Brooklyn. He bought what supplies he needed from passing peddlers, always returning to the house, neighbors said, to get the money to pay them. Two nephews, Irving W. and Alfred Smith, live at No.482 Jefferson avenue, Brooklyn.

CAVE "WILD MAN" HELD

Arrested in his cave near Stratford, N. J., the other day William Ware, alleged "wild man," is being held by the authorities for investigation in connection with numerous crimes dating as far back as eighteen years ago. Ware is said to have terrorized farmers in this section.

The wife of the "wild man" is said by officers to have made most of the allegations against him. She charges, according to officers, that her husband shot a man eight years ago and that his half-brother served a prison sentence for the crime. Her story also connects Ware with a jewel robbery committed eighteen years ago. He is a brother of John Ware, first man hanged in Camden county's old jail, according to Mrs. Ware.

A Xmas Suggestion

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A POOR BOY'S STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

"I think there is something wrong about that load of cheeses that's going away from the door."

"Ah! what do you think it is?"

"I think the order has been exceeded. If that wagon came to the door empty then I'm right. If I am in error, will you stand by me, sir?"

"Surely, my boy. Run after him and tell him to come back."

Without a word Harry darted out of the place.

Bill Strong had driven about half a block away, his progress being slow on account of other trucks that had blocked the road to some extent, but just as the boy started out the road cleared, and Strong touched up his horse to a jog trot.

Down West street ran Harry, and as he passed one of the low drinking places that are to be found in that thoroughfare, Marty came out, and was in the act of walking after the truck driven by Strong, when he caught sight of our hero running after it.

An expression of suspicion came over the face of the tough, and he came to a halt, half hiding his body behind the tall sides of a truck that stood at the curbstone.

Along came Harry Hale on the run, his eyes fastened on Bill Strong's truck, which he was determined not to lose sight of in that maze of wagons, but for all that he watched it so intently his eyes were sharp enough to note that as he reached the truck with the tall sides that a foot and leg were hastily extended in such a manner as would have surely tripped him up had he not seen them in time.

He was on the run and could not stop to avoid the foot and leg so cautiously extended at the right moment, but he was quick-witted enough to leap over the leg and then come to a sudden halt.

It flashed through his mind that this was not accidental, and he wanted to see who had tried to trip him.

He caught sight of Marty, and at the same instant that he did so the tough made a quick dash at him.

Harry had no time for argument, and much less for fight, for he knew that he must get on his way quickly if he would succeed in overtaking Bill Strong even in that crowded street, and he acted with that promptness that had stood him in well with members of the Swamp gang on previous occasions.

As the tough came rushing at him Harry quickly thrust his right foot upwards and outwards.

The members of the Swamp gang knew that the boy was handy with his fists and ready to defend himself in that way.

Naturally, Marty had looked for a fight with his fists, and although he had passed through an unpleasant experience with Harry in that line, for reasons of his own the tough was willing to engage in another battle with the lad, but the defence with the foot took him by surprise.

Before he could make a defensive movement against it, the extended foot caught him in the abdomen, and doubled him up.

Down he went at the side of the truck, and with the loss of less than ten seconds of time our hero dashed on after the receding express wagon driven by Bill Strong, while several persons ran to the aid of Marty, who lay on the ground trying to get back his breath.

Half a block further down the street Harry caught up with Strong and leaped in at the open back of the wagon.

"Hold on," he called.

The driver looked back.

He recognized Harry as the young fellow who had picked up the order when it fell to the floor.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Mr. Crossman wants to see you."

"What for?"

"He can tell you that," was the diplomatic reply.

"Well, I've promised to be at pier 8 in fifteen minutes, but I'll come to him right after that."

"That will not do."

"Say, who are you trying to boss?" savagely demanded Strong. "Get off the truck or I'll hit you with this whip."

And he raised the long-lashed whip over his head.

Harry Hale looked him calmly in the eye.

"Better not," he quietly said, and there was something in the boy's attitude and in the set of his square shoulders that made Bill Strong think twice before hitting once.

"Stay there, then, if you want to," he growled. "I'm going down to pier 8, as I promised."

He brought the lash down on the back of the horse, and the latter started off with a jump, but Harry leaped down from the wagon, sprinted ahead, and caught hold of the bit.

Harry set his feet firmly on the ground, spread his sturdy legs far apart, and put his weight against the horse, and brought him to a stop.

"Let go of that horse!" yelled the driver.

"Strong, you're making a fool of yourself," said the boy, keeping a tight hold on the bit. "If you have nothing to fear, why don't you come back as Mr. Crossman requests?"

"Because I'm in a hurry," hotly replied Strong, and throwing the reins over the seat he jumped down from it to the ground and started towards the plucky boy, who looked him fearlessly in the eye.

"Bill Strong," he quietly said, as the driver came menacingly towards him with clenched fists, "I'm not one bit afraid of you, and I don't think you can hit any harder or any quicker than I can, but I'm going to call for the police unless you get up on that seat and turn this horse around."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

"JAPANESE PEARLS" FOUND INFERIOR

Something approaching consternation swept the London market when it became known that the Japanese were producing what were declared to be real pearls by introducing into one oyster a particle of mother-of-pearl sewn up in shell-producing tissue taken from another oyster. New York jewellers were not so readily driven into panic, according to the *Scientific American*, and they now state that the unnatural stimulation induced by the method results in a pearl of distinctly inferior quality; held to the light, the difference is readily seen. The surface lacks the lustre and pinkish glow of the natural pearl; it is a dead, waxy appearance, and the texture is not so fine. As an additional precaution the X-ray is used; this never fails to differentiate the natural from the forced variety.

THE MISSISSIPPI CHOCTAWS

There are approximately 1,500 Choctaw Indians within the borders of Mississippi, remnants of the tribe that once resided in the State and that removed to Indian Territory—now Oklahoma—in 1832-33. Practically all of these Indians are farmers and land for them is the key to the situation. The sum of \$25,000 was appropriated several years ago for the purchase of forty-acre tracts on the reimbursable plan for the heads of families, and the amount was to be repaid within ten years.

A number of tracts were selected but owing to the chaotic condition of real estate records in Mississippi satisfactory titles could not be secured before the end of that fiscal year and the appropriation lapsed. The act for the current year carries an item of but \$5,000 for land purchase. A way was found to convey the land desired with an unassailable title and the money will be used as far as it will go. There are 280 heads of families, and to provide all of them with permanent land holdings at least \$30,000 would be required.

NEGRESS FINDS \$5,000 BAR PIN

Failing to find the owner of a \$5,000 bar pin she had picked up the other Wednesday afternoon from the gutter in front of 36 West Fifty-seventh street, New York, Winifred Jones, a negress of 349 Warren street, Brooklyn, employed as a dressmaker by Joseph & Co., at 20 West Fifty-seventh street, walked into the West Forty-seventh street station last night and turned the pin over to Detective William Moore. She asked Moore to help her restore the pin to its owner.

Detective Moore examined police records of reported lost and stolen jewelry and found that on March 29, 1919, Dreicer & Co., jewelers on Fifth avenue, reported the loss of a bar pin at Madison avenue and Ninetieth street, the description of which fitted the one found by the woman. It is of platinum, set with fifty half-carat diamonds and three large sapphires, one at each end and one in the centre. Moore gave the pin back to the woman and told her to go to Dreicer & Co.

"I just happened to glance down at the curb when I was walking home from work and saw

something shining there in the trash," she told Moore. "I looked in all the papers that day and the next day, and not finding any trace of the owner, I thought I'd better tell the police about it."

POWDERED COAL USED IN ENGLAND

Great interest has been taken in London recently in the use of coal in the form of powder, made by a new machine designed and manufactured by a British firm.

This new machine is self-contained; it dries and powders the coal and propels it direct into the furnace, so that there is no need to store the powdered coal or to install a plant to carry it from the grinder to the furnace.

The machine works continuously, and it dries and pulverizes at the same time. All that an operator has to do is to feed it with coal. Tests of a most practical character have been carried out on the machine for a period of twelve months, and they showed that the cost of pulverization was about 60 cents per ton, as against previous costs ranging from about \$1.25 to \$2.50 per ton. The tests also showed that a lower grade coal can be successfully used with the pulverizer.

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A DOUBLE GAME

By HORACE APPLETON

The night had fallen dark and gloomy, when a stagecoach went rattling into the small mining town of Juniata, and big Bill Surry reined in his team of bony grays before the only tavern in the place. There was only one passenger in the coach—a fine-looking fellow of thirty, with a dark mustache, who called himself John Hawkins. His massive figure was attired in a very quiet suit of black, and he wore a slouched hat in a careless manner over his determined looking face.

Going into the barroom, he asked to be accommodated, as he was desirous of remaining in the town until the stagecoach went on again.

As the newcomer glanced around, his eyes rested upon a man who was sitting alone at a table near the stove, and he began to evince a sudden interest in the very stylish-looking individual.

Walking over to the table, he sat down beside him.

"What is all the talk about?" asked the newcomer, after a moment.

"Oh, the Doggerel Poet has been heard from again," said the man with the diamonds.

"Who is that?" asked the stranger in surprise.

"He stops the stagecoach single-handed, generally takes the mailbags, and after he returns the empty sacks, it has a sheet of paper pinned on, containing a few lines of doggerel verses the highwayman scribbles."

"Has this thief any peculiarities?"

"They say he usually wears a sack over his head, with arm-holes and eye-holes in it," replied the other. "It conceals his identity. Nobody knows if he is old or young. That is the only peculiarity I know of, besides his poetry and a double-barreled shotgun."

"What was his latest exploit?" asked Hawkins.

"He stopped the mailcoach from here to Saginaw, made a good haul this morning and got away. It seems impossible to catch him."

The man got up after a while, and spoke to the landlord behind the bar.

"Who be that thar feller wi' ther sparklers?" he asked.

"Oh, they calls him Diamond Dick hereabouts, Mr. Hawkins. Reg'lar skin wi' ther cards, I've heard."

"Strange," he mused, "I've been in every town hereabout, and have never herd of him. If he is such a notorious fellow he ought to be known outside of this place, yet he isn't, and that don't accord with what the landlord just told me. I'll keep my eye upon him."

At that moment something bright and glittering fell from under the lapel of Mr. Hawkins's coat and struck the floor with a metallic ring.

He quickly stooped down, snatched it up and thrust it into his pocket.

But not before Diamond Dick's black eyes saw it.

"A badgel!" he muttered. "Then he is an officer."

Mr. Hawkins was mortified at the accident evidently.

"How long before the stage coach departs?" he asked, in confused tones.

The inn-keeper had not seen the badge and replied:

"Yer kin sleep till mornin' a'most. It goes at four."

"Good! Can you show me up to my room?"

"Certainly. Come on, sir—come on, Mr. Hawkins."

Leading Mr. Hawkins up a dark and rickety flight of stairs, the landlord left him at the door of a bedroom, and entering the apartment, the man ignited a candle and glanced around.

It contained two beds, a few chairs, a washstand, and had no carpet on the floor. There were two windows at the back, opening on the horse-shed.

Having taken a survey of his surrounding, Mr. Hawkins began to undress himself. He had not gotten any more than his coat off, when he heard a knock at the door and the landlord's voice.

"Mr. Hawkins! Be you in bed yet, sir?"

"No. What is wanted?" asked the stranger.

"I forgot ter tell yer, sir, as Diamond Dick engaged a bed in your room, too."

"Ah, yes. I see two beds in here. It is all right, though."

He drew a tiny vial from his pocket and placed it under his pillow with his handkerchief, then disrobing, he crept to the window and peered out.

Loosening the latch, he lifted up the sash, and saw a saddle-horse tethered in under a shed just below the bedroom.

In the back the man saw the faintly-traced outlines of the stagecoach trail running away over the rolling, hilly country toward Saginaw.

There came a distant howling, borne on the night wind, and there stole a grim look of satisfaction upon Mr. Hawkins's face as this sound reached his ears. He muttered in soft tones:

"Wolves—wolves! Who could mistake those sounds. Now let Diamond Dick come up! I am prepared for him. He will be surprised."

Stealthily returning to the bed, beside which he had undressed himself, Mr. Hawkins unlocked the door and crept into his couch.

Five minutes afterward he seemed to be fast asleep.

The candle was left burning on the washstand, diffusing a dull glow in the room, and plainly revealed his white, upturned face.

Fully an hour passed by before the door opened.

It was the face of the bewhiskered Diamond Dick that appeared in the aperture of the partially opened door, and his black, restless eyes were bent upon the figure of Mr. Hawkins searchingly for an instant.

Then he closed the door and whispered to a man who stood behind him.

This personage looked very much like a fat miner, and was about as evil looking a fellow as could be found.

He nodded his head when Diamond Dick finished whispering and glided softly downstairs again, where he vanished in the darkness.

Then the bearded man crept into the room.

Mr. Hawkins saw him through his partially-opened eyelids.

Diamond Dick was of his jewels.

He had handed the before entering.

Glancing at Mr. Hawkins, he saw that he was, to all appearances, profoundly sleeping, then he lifted the man's coat, felt in the pocket, and drew out the badge which he had seen the stranger drop down in the barroom.

Then his deft fingers rapidly went through Mr. Hawkins's other pockets.

Having satisfied his curiosity, he retired to bed, divesting himself of most all his clothing.

Within a few moments only the heavy breathing of the two men was heard.

Neither of them were sleeping, and each one was watching the other out of his half-closed eyelids by the dim light of the candle.

Several hours passed slowly by.

Then Mr. Hawkins sat up in bed and glanced toward the gambler.

Then he took the vial and handkerchief and crept toward the gambler.

But the gambler now awoke.

Uttering an exclamation of anger at his carelessness for falling asleep after he had resolved upon remaining awake, he sprang from the bed and grappled with Mr. Hawkins without delay.

Before he could prevent it, though, Hawkins thrust the drugged handkerchief in his face and he inhaled the deadly fumes of the drug.

The gambler fought with impotent fury as he felt the drug stealing his senses away. So desperate were his struggles, what little clothing he had on was torn from his body, then he fell back senseless.

Hastily donning his clothing, Hawkins lifted the sash, and raising the insensible man in his arms, he climbed out of the window to the horse-shed with him. From there he descended to the ground on a ladder with his burden and laid him down on some logs.

Leading the horse from under the shed, he secured a lariat to the pommel of the saddle, and seizing Diamond Dick, he mounted.

Just as he was about to drive away the back door of the tavern opened and the man to whom the gambler had spoken in the hall appeared, carrying a lantern in his hand.

Mr. Hawkins saw him run toward the ladder and climb up.

This did not suit the stranger, so he plunged spurs into the horse's flanks and sped rapidly away on the stagecoach trail.

It did not take him long to put a league between himself and the tavern. Then he was within a short distance of the Giant's Arm Chair.

Alighting from the horse, he laid the gambler on the ground, and cutting his lariat into three sections, he picked up a small sapling.

This he fashioned into three strong wedges.

With a rock he drove one into the ground near Diamond Dick's feet, the other two he fastened into the earth on each side of the man's head.

Then with one of the pieces of the lariat he tied Dick's ankles together and made them fast to the stake. Binding each of his wrists similarly, he fastened them down cruciform and then surveyed his handiwork.

Assured that Diamond Dick could do him no harm, he mounted the horse and rode back to the tavern. Here he secured a package he had left in the stage, and, leaving the horse under

the shed, he returned to his room and sat down to await the landlord's summons.

In the meantime Diamond Dick recovered his senses.

Then he discovered how Mr. Hawkins had fastened him down.

And to increase the misery of his situation, he heard the howling of the wolves drawing nearer to him every moment.

Then he saw numbers of dark, shadowy bodies flit snarling near him, their eyes glaring like balls of fire, with the maddening effect of their hunger.

The wolves were all round him, circling in nearer each moment.

They then attacked him, their fangs sinking into his limbs and body, and unable to stand the torture, he closed his eyes and lapsed into sensibility.

* * * * *

There sounded the merry jingle of bells, the sharp crack of Bill Surry's whip, and the rumble of wheels in the yard of the "Juniata Mug," as the stagecoach was hustled out to the trail by the bony team of grays.

Mr. Hawkins had his bundle in his hand.

One was a short man with a smooth, fat face and coarse clothing.

The other one looked like a miner who had never used a razor or shears, for his hair was as long as his beard, and what little of his face there was to be seen was as red as a lobster.

The road now became rocky, the stage jolted a good deal, and after a while there came a sudden crash, as a nut came off and the whole concern went down.

Mr. Hawkins now disappeared; but shortly a figure was seen in a bag emerging from the bushes beside the road.

"It's the Doggerel Poet!" exclaimed Surry, in alarmed tones. "Right you are, pilgrim!" laughed the man with the bag over his head.

"Lord help us," gasped the fat man, in alarmed tones. "He will murder us!"

The miner began to feel for a weapon, but the poet observed the action.

"Stop that!" he exclaimed. "Lower your hands or I'll drop you!"

But just then there sounded a sudden report.

The miner had fired a pistol which he had concealed up his sleeve, and the jolly highwayman uttered a loud cry, and, reeling back, he fell to the ground in a heap.

Then the fat man bounded forward and pulled the flour sack from off the fallen poet's head, while the miner ran up to him.

"Mr. Hawkins," he exclaimed, "the game is up! I know you, sir."

At the same moment the miner spoke his bushy beard fell off.

"Diamond Dick, the gambler!" gasped the fallen highwayman, as his glance rested on the other.

"Yes, I am the man you thought you had left for the wolves to finish, but I succeeded in getting away——" But these were his last words, for with his remaining strength the highwayman pulled a revolver and shot him dead. The next moment Hawkins was dead also.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1922

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

TURNING BONES INTO BOOZE

Living men with bones of booze may soon be a common sight, according to an important announcement to the Academy of Science at Paris by Prof. Acumer, disclosing a method by which large quantities of copper may be introduced into the human organism by means of electricity.

The process consists of passing a weak current through two electrodes soaked with a solution of sulphate of copper, the electrodes being placed on the skin of the patient.

It is thus possible to introduce five to ten centigrammes of metallic copper daily, eventually saturating the organism to such a degree that the bones become metallic and the skin takes on a bronze hue.

STATUS OF THE SHARK FISHERY

The attempt to put the shark fishery on a permanent basis is progressing satisfactorily in spite of adverse conditions in the fishing industry. It has been proved that the hides provide leather of good quality for collar boxes and similar goods, and that a nourishing meal for feeding purposes is obtainable from the flesh; the leather is now being tested in shoes. Oil and scrap are at present bringing low prices, but the demand for skins exceeds the supply. Investigation is necessary as to the taking of sharks in commercial quantities and the areas and seasons of greatest abundance; the Government appropriation is exhausted, but private enterprise should now be able to handle the situation.

SWEDEN HAS RICH FIND OF COPPER

A discovery of new mineral wealth in Sweden is announced by Director Axel Gavelin, head of the Government Geological Research Department, who has asked the Riksdag for an appropriation to cover the investigation of the newly found ore deposits.

These lie in central Sweden, and consist of iron, zinc and copper ore. Mr. Gavelin does not give exact details as to the total size of these deposits, but he considers them extremely promising, and says that if further research fulfills his expecta-

tations, the copper find especially is valuable and will form a national asset of great importance.

The total iron ore deposits of Sweden already known are calculated to be nearly 1,400,000,000 tons, running an average of 60 per cent iron, which is said to be over 23 per cent. more than the average for all iron ore mined in the rest of Europe, and is 16 per cent. more than the average for the world as a whole.

Although much of Sweden's iron ore is used for the domestic manufacture of iron and steel, the export is considerable. In 1913 the total export was six and a half million tons, while last year the figures were four and a half millions.

Copper mining and export, which is hundreds of years old in Sweden, had declined of recent years, and the familiar copper ware seen in every Swedish home was in a fair way of becoming valuable antiques. Now, however, a revival of the Swedish copper industry may result from the newly discovered deposits.

LAUGHS

Van Demmit—Rather poor house, to-night, eh?
Manager—Yes, poor but honest. No passes were given to-night.

"Now, Daisy, can you tell me the name of the insignificant little worm by whose industry I am able to wear this silk dress?" "I know—papa."

Mamma—Baby simply loves to play with my hair all day. Visitor—Good gracious! You surely don't trust him with it when you've gone out?

"I wish some powder for a bomb," said the militant suffragette. "Quite so," murmured the clerk. "What kind?" "Pink, I guess. That's the shade I always use on my face."

"Is he what you would call a first-class newspaper man?" "I should say so. When the 'end of the world' scare was at its height he had two editions written—one to publish if it did come off, and the other if it didn't!"

Mickey—If yer refuse me, Elizabeth, wot is there left fer me ter do? Lizzie—Well, I read the other day about a rich guy who made his will in favor of de lady wot spurned him, and then he went and hanged hisself."

"I can't use this stuff," said the editor; "it's nothing but gas!" "I suppose," sadly replied the poet, "that's why you turned it down." "Not entirely," said the editor; "there was also something wrong with the metre."

"Er—Miss Willing—" "Yes, Mr. Slowe?" "Er—do you mind if I—er—hold your hand?" "Indeed, Mr. Slowe, and why do you want to hold my hand?" "Why—er—it might—er give me courage—er—to say something that—er—that I—" "I—!—!—! Here, Mr. Slowe, hold both my hands!"

GOOD READING

PAIR OF SPANISH STAMPS SOLD FOR-
130,000 FRANCS

A vertical pair of Spanish two real stamps of the issue of 1851 brought 130,000 francs recently in the sale of the fifth section of the stamp collection of the late Count Ferrari. This was the high-water mark of the opening day of the auction. The Bermuda one penny, issue of 1854, on the entire envelope, brought 30,000 francs, while other rare specimens sold at from 1,000 to 15,000 francs.

EASTER ISLAND REPORTED WIPED OUT
BY QUAKE

The local newspaper of Santiago, Chile, Nov. 15, published a rumor concerning the possibility of the disappearance of Easter Island, lying far out in the Pacific Ocean west of the coast of the province of Atacama, during the recent earthquake.

The newspaper says the wireless station on the island has failed to answer repeated calls. Official information of any kind regarding the island is lacking. The island, which is 2,500 miles off the coast, belongs of Chile. Easter Island is triangular in shape. Its greatest length is twelve miles and its broadest part four miles. It covers an area of about fifty-five square miles. The island is of volcanic origin and contains many extinct craters. It is remarkable for its stone houses, sculptured stones and gigantic figures carved in trachytic lava. The greatest height of the island is 1,960 feet above sea level. For many years it was used as a Chilean penitentiary.

GAMBLING MANIA IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Several aspects of gambling have come before the States of the Australian Commonwealth and the New South Wales Government has outlined proposals to combat the gambling mania, especially promiscuous raffles and lotteries.

The new act calls for restrictions of the Tattersalls Sweeps and the Golden Casket, by which the Queensland Government obtains certain money for the upkeep of its hospitals. It will be made an offense for newspapers to publish the result of these sweeps, punishable by a fine of 200 pounds, and the display upon any premises of any information regarding a lottery will be punishable by the same sentence.

The new act will restrict the sale of tickets to the bazaar or fair with which the lottery is connected, and provides that any person concerned in raffle or lottery who converts to his own use any of the prizes of money raised shall be liable to five years' imprisonment.

PESTERED BY SUITERS

Hundreds of fortune hunters from all parts of the world are seeking the hand of Exie Fife, eighteen, beautiful Cherokee Indian girl, whose old lands are valued at \$30,000,000.

Six months ago Exie's name was barely known to the Postmaster of Fame, the little Indian village near Muskogee, Okla., where she gets her

mail. Now the volume of the incoming correspondence threatens to swamp the rural carrier.

Each mail brings a fresh batch of proposals and scores of other letters asking charity donations, etc.

The self-styled suitors mean nothing in Exie's young life, for she has her farmer boy, Burlin Jackson, twenty-one, to whom she is engaged.

Burlin is not a fortune hunter. The \$30,000,000 is merely an incident in his romance with Exie, which started four years ago before the girl even dreamed of oil or riches.

Many of the applicants for the Indian girl's hand would be interested, perhaps, to know what becomes of their photographs. Tacked on the wall of the cabin, they compose a unique "gallery." Exie's Indian friends gather before the "gallery" and indulge in Creek wit.

Exie was born in a one-room shack, to which has been added three rooms. She was born a year before allotting of land to Indians ceased. She was allotted 160 acres in Creek County. Oil was discovered upon her allotment six months ago. There are three producers and several more wells being drilled. Her monthly income is estimated at 53,000.

THE OLD SCYTHE TREE

The picture prize contest for the most important historical tree in the State of New York, conducted by the New York State College of Forestry, has been decided and the prize won by Alva H. Pulver of Sodus, N. Y.

The tree is located on the farm of Clarence Schaeffer in Seneca county. It is a Balm of Gilead tree and is known in the neighborhood as "the old scythe tree." The story in connection with the tree follows:

"In 1861, when he learned Fort Sumter had been fired on, James Wyburn Johnson of the town of Waterloo, N. Y., came in from the field bringing his sythe, which was placed in a small Balm of Gilead tree near the house. With the final remark 'Leave the sythe in the tree until I return,' he enlisted in the Union service.

"The parents of young Johnson for a time heard from their boy, and then a silence came, extending from month to month. The war records show that the young man was mortally wounded in North Carolina, dying in a hospital there, and was buried in the South in 1864. In the years of the war the scythe was religiously confined to the tree and it was some time afterward before the family finally learned of their son's fate. In the meantime the six-inch sapling began to grow about the blade of the scythe. It finally held the scythe securely and the inroads of the elements loosened the handle, which dropped away. At the present time only about six inches of the blade protrudes from the side of the tree."

The G. A. R. Post of Waterloo maintains a flag on the tree in memory of Johnson from year to year. As soon as one is frayed it is replaced by a new one. Each Memorial Day the post conducts its annual services under the spreading branches of the tree, which now has a span of about 90 feet and is fully 100 feet high.

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

BOTTLED LETTER FOUND

After floating in many streams for nearly six years, the following letter was found in a bottle in the Missouri River by Councilman Thomas L. Taggart and City Chemist W. D. Hayes, while they were hunting near Elk Point, S. D., one morning:

"Sent March 24, 1917, from Timmer, N. D.—May this Easter prove the brightest of any you have spent. And bring you great measure of joy and content.

"Please let me know who found this and where, and what time it was found. Sent by Mrs. Ole F. Aplin, into Dogtooth Creek, one mile southeast of town."

There was also a return envelope in the bottle. Taggart has mailed the note back to the sender.

PHILADELPHIAN'S HEIRS GET CANADIAN MINE

The Privy Council in London has confirmed the heirs of Allen I. Smith, Philadelphia, Pa., in possession of the Engineer group of mines at Allin, B. C., according to a cable from the lawyer who represented them in a case involving their title by the Engineer Mining Company.

The property, ranking as one of the most valuable gold mines in the British Empire, was acquired by the company. After lapse of title for failure to meet legal requirements, the claims were restaked by Capt. James Alexander, who later was drowned in a steamship disaster. His will conveyed the property to Smith, an associate, who died in 1919. The company charged that Alexander had wrongfully staked the mines.

CHOKES BOA CONSTRICTOR

Attacked by a monster boa constrictor recently captured in the jungles of Africa, Frank Weinberg, animal trainer, barely escaped the other day from a battle with the reptile and suffered severe lacerations of the right hand, inflicted by the snake.

The boa attacked Weinberg while he was showing his collection of jungle animals to some friends and tilted the box top in which the snake was kept at his home in Los Angeles, Cal.

The snake, infuriated because of its incarceration, forced its way from the box and wrapped its strong coils about Weinberg's right thigh. Remaining calm, Weinberg forced his right hand into the reptile's mouth, fairly choking it. After a five-minute struggle the snake let go its coils and Weinberg freed himself.

SEARCH FOR PEARLS IN MEXICAN WATERS

An exclusive concession for exploring and exploiting the waters of the middle and upper part of the Gulf of California for pearls has been granted Paul Masin of Paris, France, and Paul Opela and Telesofro Navarro of La Paz, by the Mexican Government. The owners of the concession will form a company and establish a large fleet of pearling ships.

It is stated that in addition to obtaining pearls in the natural way by means of diving for the

bivalves that contain the gems the company will cultivate pearls on an extensive scale. This artificial production of pearls is now being successfully carried on near La Paz by Japanese.

It has long been known that pearls are to be found in great numbers in the waters bordering the coast of Lower California, extending north and south of Santa Rosalia for more than 100 miles, but heretofore the Mexican Government has refused to permit the development of the industry in this part of the Gulf of California.

MAKES \$1,000 VIOLIN

Peter Baltzerson, Roslindale, wood carver, the other day completed the triumph of his art—an inlaid violin which will grace the famous collection of the Providence millionaire collector, John W. Coggeshall.

Baltzerson, a Norwegian by birth but now an applicant for United States citizenship, lives at No. 130 Cornell street, Roslindale, and has a little shop for wood carving at No. 218 Tremont street, Boston, Mass. He has followed his trade from boyhood and a year ago returned to his native land to select the wood for a violin he was commissioned to make for Coggeshall. Sycamore and Azeroe pine were among the instrument woods he selected and brought back to Boston with him, and in the back of the new violin is wood seventy-five years old.

The pegs are of hand-worked pearl and gold, bringing the value of the violin up to more than \$1,000. It is the first new instrument Mr. Coggeshall has added to his collection, which includes many valuable examples of the work of Guarneri, Steiner and Stradivari.

SOMETHING ABOUT BORNEO

Borneo is a large island of the Malay Archipelago divided into various states. Its area is estimated at 300,000 square miles and its population at 2,000,000. Holland claims as a possession 212,757 square miles of the island, with a population of about 1,250,000. As a matter of fact this large possession is parceled out into various native states. Those on the coast are more or less under Dutch influence. The principal Dutch settlements are at Sambas, Pontiana, Banjarmasin and Koti. On the northwest coast is Sarawak, to the northeast lies Brunei, and beyond that British North Borneo. Between British North Borneo and the Dutch territory on the east is the native state of Sulu. The whole island is rich in valuable timber, woods, fruits, spices, drugs and gums, and has a varied fauna. Petroleum is found at Koti and portions of the east coast, and the minerals of the island are coal, iron, gold, diamonds, antimony and quicksilver. The soil is exceedingly fertile, and well adapted to the cultivation of tropical products. The principal exports are sago, beeswax, edible birds, gutta percha, spices, drugs and dyes. The people belong to various races, Malays, Dyaks, Negritos, Bugis and Chinese. Tattooed races, Kanakans, Pakotans, and others inhabit the interior of the island.

SWAM 175 MILES IN THREE MONTHS

At Lowestoff on the Suffolk coast near Yarmouth, England, experiments are being carried out to discover how far and in what direction fish travel, times of migration, and speed of growth.

Specimen fish are caught and measured. Weedy and sickly fish are thrown out. The best specimens are set free and a record is kept of the places where they are released. The fish are marked with two ebonite discs joined by a short silver wire. Flat fish are marked near the side fin and round fish, like cod, on the back fin or in a flap of loose skin at the gills.

Much valuable information is obtained when these "buttoned" fish are recaptured. It was found that a 15-inch plaice travelled 175 miles—from the coast to the English Channel—in three months. Another liberated at Marblethorpe, Lincolnshire, made a journey of 210 miles to St. Andrew's Bay in eight months. Small plaice taken from the Danish and Dutch banks were liberated on the Dogger and it was found that they grew more than three times as fast as those on the inshore grounds.

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I will tell you the easiest, pleasant way so you feel gloriously better at once and keep improving. Others, men and women, say they gain efficiency to earn more, and they find new exhilaration they never thought within them. So why not you? No drugs or medicines. Write for free information, mention how you use tobacco. Paul Riker, 124-B, Saugatuck, Conn.

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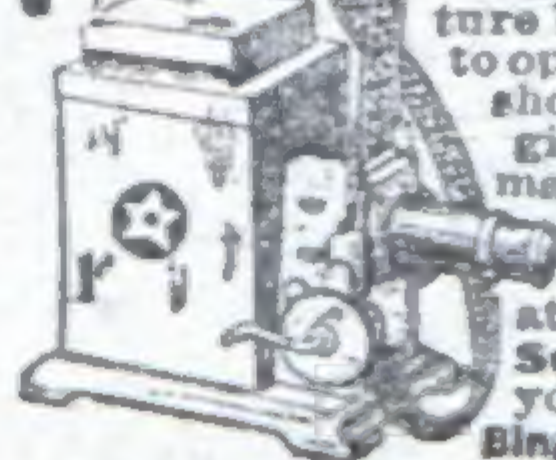


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State



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HOW YOU CAN GET THIS GREAT MOVING PICTURE MACHINE — READ MY WONDERFUL OFFER TO YOU

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail today. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as "Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"—"Washington at Home"—"Battle of Lake Erie," etc. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 30-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected \$6.00. Send the \$6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

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50,000 boys happy. Answer at once.
Be the first in your town to get one.

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615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 120, New York

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SHOWS CLEAR PICTURES

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

SOLD HIS FOR \$10.00 AND ORDERED ANOTHER

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for \$10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

WOULD NOT GIVE AWAY FOR \$25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for \$25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeaneville, Pa. Box 34.

BETTER THAN A \$12.00 MACHINE

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a \$12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.



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